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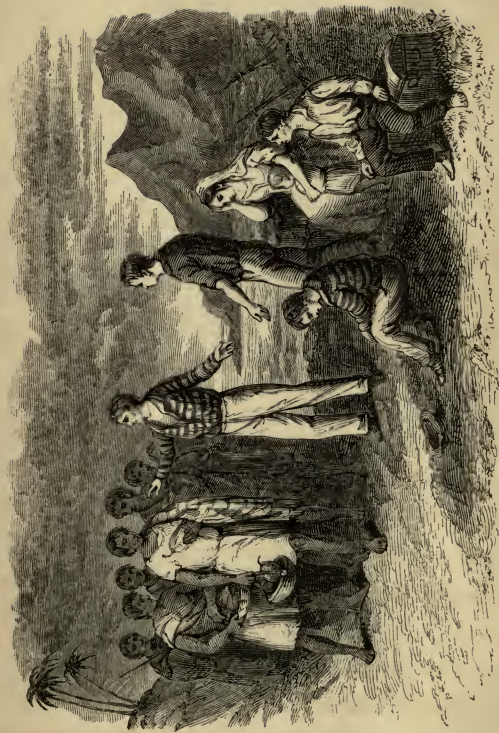
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THE
EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY
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The Shipwrecked Mariners.

TOWERS OF ZION;

II

OR, THE

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY ILLUSTRATED.

EP 172

“ Walk about Zion, and go round about her : tell the towers thereof.”

Ps. xlviii. 12.



NEW-YORK!

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF
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11 BIBLE HOUSE, ASTOR PLACE.

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PREFACE.

THIS little volume will be found to be what its title indicates, an *illustration* of the evidences of Christianity. The author anticipates the objection, which may appear to some to be valid, that it is too full of illustrations—that the subject is lowered by the abundance of stories. He would suggest to such an objector to keep in mind the class of readers for whom it was especially prepared—the youth; and if he is still skeptical on this point, let him take a volume on the same subject, logically, and if he please eloquently written, with the illustrative stories omitted, and place it in the hands of any youth of ordinary intelligence, and let him notice the amount of interest it excites. In

most cases, it will be opened, its leaves turned over, and then it will be laid aside. Of what avail are books in the hands of young persons, however good and well written, if they have not attractions, *to them*, sufficient to secure their attentive perusal?

That this is such a book, the author will not pretend to say; but he has endeavored to keep constantly in view, in writing it, two points: first, to present the arguments clearly and forcibly; and secondly, to clothe them in an attractive form, so that they will be read and remembered.

The language is such as occurred under the stimulus of writing, without any effort or desire to use children's words. If the outlines are drawn within a young person's capacity, the verbal detail will generally be readily understood.

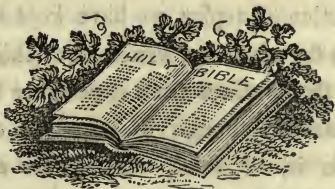
An adept in the voluminous subject of Christian evidences will find the following but a sketch of the mass of materials they contain; he may discover that which is a strong point

to him, omitted and matter of less force, in his estimation, introduced. It must be remembered by such, that different minds are differently affected by the same argument. The elaborate argument of Butler, and the more elegantly expressed argument of Dr. Hopkins on the same point, may be the almost exclusive grounds of faith in the Scriptures to some philosophical and cultivated intellects; but it would be difficult to popularize it, or make it appreciated by an immature mind, in whatever form presented. As in the illustrations, so in the selection of topics, we have kept before us the class for whom we write. For this reason, in part, the evidence from experience has been fully detailed, though it must be conceded that this is, of itself, one of the strongest grounds of faith in the divinity of the Bible.

We remark here, as we have done in the concluding chapter, that this work is not intended *fully* to instruct the Christian student on the subject discussed, but only to open the way—to excite a relish for its more full inves-

tigation, as well as to prepare the inexperienced, in some measure, against the insidious approaches of unbelief, which are sure to find access to the unregenerated heart.

With these few prefatory remarks, the book is commended to the candid perusal of the reader.



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THE

EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY

ILLUSTRATED.

TOWER I.

INTRODUCTION.

SECTION I.—*Children believe the Bible—The Object of this Book.*

A TRAVELLER started from a city of New England, to go to New Orleans by land. He was a devoted friend of Sunday-schools, and had, for many years, been trying to promote their usefulness. Before leaving home he stepped into a Sunday-school of many hundred scholars. He walked silently down the middle of the room, passing from class to class of happy children. Taking up a Bible he asked some little boys, "Whose book is this?" "The book of God," was the prompt reply. He repeated the question to several classes. The answer was always the same in substance.

When he reached New York, standing before a large company of youth, he again asked, "From

whom did men receive the Bible?" "From God."
"Is it all true then?" "Yes."

Going from New York, he visited many large cities, and then passing over the mountains into the little retired towns of the "Far West," where a few boys and girls were assembled in an humble place of worship, he asked again, "Whose book is it that you study on the Sabbath?" And the answer was still the same. The traveller noted in his memorandum-book all these replies.

But why did he ask so plain a question, so easily answered? And of what interest were the children's replies? They impressed upon his mind a great truth, viz.—*the children of our Sunday-schools believe the Bible.*

But now suppose he had asked them this question, "WHY do you believe that the Bible is God's book? Your geography is not, in the same sense, God's book; neither is your arithmetic, nor your grammar, nor your reading-book, God's book." Perhaps many would have said, "Because my parents and teachers have told us so." And they would have had no reason to be ashamed of that answer. It is right for children to believe a great many important truths, because older and wiser persons than themselves say they are truths, though they are not yet able to understand why they are believed to be truths. Let me illustrate this.

Two children are at play on the side of a grassy

hill. The sun seems to be exactly over the hill-top, upon which it seemed about to rest. The children watch its progress, because they know that when it is hidden behind the hill, their parents will expect them to come home. As its bright rays were gilding the tops of the tall trees, and their shadows stretched far along the plain, the youngest boy exclaimed,

"There! the sun has moved from away up there," pointing nearly over his head, "and has gone behind the hill since we have been at play."

"No!" replied his brother, with the air of one deeply learned—"father told us the other night, that the sun does not move, but the earth moves and the sun stands still."

"But," said the little doubter, "did not we see it move?"

"Well," answered his brother thoughtfully, "father says it does not move, and I heard our school-teacher explaining it to some of the large scholars the other day, and I believe it, though I do not understand how it can be, exactly."

And by and by, this little boy will be permitted to study some simple explanation of the known truth, that it is the earth which moves and not the sun. This will strengthen his belief, and in due time, if he have opportunities for learning, he may be able to prove to others, beyond all reasonable doubt, that it is really so.

Now I suppose all the children who read this book believe the Bible to be written by good men, who were taught what to write by God himself; and the most of them believe this because they have been told so, just as they believe the earth turns round every day, because they are told so.

SECTION II.—*The Nature of Evidence illustrated.*

QUITE recently the newspapers have published accounts of gold being discovered in California, one of our newly-acquired States. It is said that some American officers and soldiers have been there, and hunters have visited the same places, and have dug up some of the precious metal. The report has been *believed* and *acted* upon. Many young men and some old men have left their homes, taken the little money which they have saved from the earnings of many years of hard toil, and spent it all to enable them to get into these reported gold regions. Vessels are constantly fitted out from some of our large cities to carry on business with them.

Now let us examine the *reasons* upon which these men act. The newspapers contain accounts of visits of various persons to these places, and of their finding gold. But the newspaper editors are often deceived, and print many such things which are not true. May not this be untrue? And if officers and soldiers have found what they *call* gold,

may they not be mistaken? A few years ago the following circumstance actually happened. A vessel went on to the coast of California to trade with the natives in the common articles of commerce. Soon after they arrived, they found a yellow, shining mineral which they called *gold*. The sailors thought it was gold, and the captain thought it was gold, and they neglected their regular business, and filled their vessel with *gold* dust, as they supposed, and returned home, anticipating future riches and ease. But no sooner did some of their friends see it than they pronounced it to be a useless, yellow mineral, and known to be so by persons skilled in metals. Such it really was. Now may not these California gold mines be of the same character? But even if there is gold there, how natural that the account should be exaggerated, and only a small part of it be true! There may be only a very *little* gold, and worth no person's time and expense to obtain it.

All these objections are natural, and may be true, yet men are acting upon the reasons given, namely the evidence or proof contained in newspaper statements. I wish this to be remembered as a matter of fact.

A traveller wishes to go to China. He knows that it is a very great distance from the port in America from which he sails. The wide ocean is to be traversed. The dark night will close upon him while surrounded with one vast expanse of water.

Even at mid-day and in the clearest sunshine, there is no path. The tempest will come down upon the ocean with terrible fury, and the strong currents will drive against the ship, in directions opposite to that in which their way lies. Will the captain be able to keep his course amidst the darkness of the night—when there is nothing but water, from the bosom of which the sun seems to rise, and into which it appears to plunge at evening? Will he assuredly sail towards the distant port? Will he be able to manage his frail and trembling ship when the storm suddenly spends its strength upon it? Will he not mistake one of the many countries and ports of the long voyage for that one for which he is destined?

Few travellers, perhaps, stop to make any of these inquiries. Those who do would be satisfied with reasons something like the following:—The captain by certain scientific calculations can tell both by night and day, in storms and in fair weather, his exact course. Experience has taught a safe and comparatively easy management of the vessel, in the hour of the greatest peril. And the most satisfactory proof of all is that thousands of ships make the contemplated voyage in safety. All this would be said in proof of its possibility, and in answer to the objections proposed. But, after all, any man might be unwilling to exercise a practical faith in the practicableness of a voyage. There is no such

proof as to remove every possibility of doubt. None are compelled to believe.

Of the same nature are the evidences that the Bible is God's word. They are much stronger—and they are more abundant than those upon which men act in common life. Men risk their worldly all to seek gold upon less evidence of success. They expose their lives upon the ocean with less proof of safety. But the Bible does not compel our belief. It affords many and strong evidences of its divine origin, and leaves men to receive them as they do the evidence of common things.

SECTION III.—*Suggestions.*

WHILE you study these pages, you will do well to remember what the Bible claims to be, namely—*“The book of God.”* Go out in a pleasant evening and look at the bright, clear sky. Behold the stars which shine with so much brilliancy, and the moon which moves so silently among the clouds, shedding her soft beams over the streams and the forest, and then think of him who made all these. Remember that the Bible claims that same God as its author. Think of the many mercies which crown your life, the food that loads your tables, the house that shelters you from the storm, the friends that so abundantly provide for you, and then think of the *“Father of lights,”* from whom come all these

good gifts, and recollect that *he* is declared to be the author of the Bible. If you believe that God gives you food and raiment, home and friends, that the stars shine for your instruction, and the moon gives her light for your good, that every day of your life shows that you are the object of his care, then it will be reasonable for you to believe that this same good God would tell you in some plain way what he wishes you to do to please him, and for what purpose he had made you, and what was to become of you hereafter. You will do well then to remember this second great truth, that the Bible is the only book which has any good claim to be from God. You would not go to the pretended prophet Mohammed, and take his book, the Koran, which enforces its claims by the sword, and promises to gratify the worst passions of men as the reward of faith. And with less reason, if possible, would you go to the Mormon prophet, whose degraded life is a fair reflection of the character of his pretended revelation from God.

If the Bible claims to be "God's book," and if we must believe that God has not told his children upon earth what is his will and their duty, unless he has told them so in this book, then I think you will agree with me that we ought carefully and seriously to consider the evidence that the Bible is the word of God. When Washington was about to retire from the presidency of the United States, and

return to private life, he wrote an affectionate address to the people of this country. He gave them such advice as his long experience and deep interest in his country's welfare suggested. That address is greatly respected by every true American; and indeed every letter and every word which professes to come from him is examined with great respect and care.

Suppose any one of my readers is left an orphan, when but a child. He grows up with but little knowledge of his parents, except the remarks which are occasionally dropped, that they were very devoted Christians. When about to engage in the active duties of life, young, and, of course, inexperienced,—with a feeling of loneliness, and a despondency of spirits, being ready to say, “Nobody cares for me,—there is no friend to advise, or sympathize with me:” suppose a manuscript should be given to him, professing to be written by his own father, just before his death. He opens it and examines the handwriting, and compares it with the record of the children's names, wrote by his father's hand in the old family Bible. He inquires where it came from, and investigates carefully all the evidence that it really is from his father. He reads it. It calls him by name. It points out, with a father's affectionate solicitude, the path of honour and success in life. It warns him of dangers which he never before thought of. It is full of sympathy. It not only contains

the best earthly advice upon which he can rely, but it is the only exhibition of his departed parent's character and wishes concerning his son, that has ever come to his knowledge. With what interest and respect does he examine the hand-writing, and study its history since it was written, and reflect upon its claims as a genuine manuscript, and that it is really what it is said to be, "A father's dying and only advice to his son." The document itself would seem at once to him to be so excellent, that his feelings would be on the side of its being true. He would desire it to be so. But if, in the course of time, this son should become very profane, idle, and in every respect unworthy of such an excellent father; and if, upon a more careful perusal of this manuscript, it should warn him against the consequences of the course he was pursuing, uttering the most pointed reproof, and holding up a very different course of conduct as the only one that can be safely or honourably pursued, he would then perhaps feel differently in reference to the evidence which showed it to be from his parent's hand. He would wish to disprove it—he would gladly have the manuscript destroyed.

Without the Bible, my young friend, we are like such an orphan. We have no certain adviser with regard to another world; our way is dark, and the future full of gloomy forebodings. Dangers beset us on every side, and perplexities meet us at every turn.

Why were we created? What must we do? What will become of us? are questions we never could answer, except by the light of the Bible. But this book professes to solve all doubt. If you have the *right state of heart*, you will examine it with a desire to receive all the evidence of its truth. It will seem so desirable to have your Father who is in heaven by your side, as it were, to counsel you, that your heart will leap with joy, as, step by step, the evidences of its truth unfold to your apprehension. But if you so live that it reproves you—if you are the dissipated and prodigal son—if all your affections are upon earth, I have every reason to fear that you will not consider the evidence I am about to offer in a candid spirit.

Seek to love that which is good. Be a child indeed, that you may learn. Remember you are a worm,—and God is the holy and just one who inhabiteth eternity—whose ways are past finding out. Try to say from the heart, “Oh, may the Bible stand forth to me, in all the fulness of its claims, as his revelation—may my head and my heart be disposed to receive it in the love of it.”



TOWER II.

EVIDENCE FROM TESTIMONY.

SECTION I.—*Testimony illustrated.*

THE year 1848 was remarkable for a great revolution in France. It commenced with the overthrow of the government of Louis Philippe, and the establishment of a government by the people. In June, there was an unsuccessful attempt to put down the new rulers, and many thousands of the citizens and soldiers were killed. In December, a republic was established and a president chosen. Now suppose a person had arrived in the United States at the time of the commencement of the revolution, and had declared that Louis Philippe, the king of France, notwithstanding he had trained and well-paid soldiers around his palace and parading through every street, and though the walls of Paris had just been fortified at enormous expense, and the city was supplied with well-stored magazines, had been driven from his throne and been compelled to fly with his family from the country, destitute of the ordinary means of subsistence, and that all this was ac-

complished in the face of these soldiers and all these defences, by an unarmed people, without the shedding of a drop of blood! The inquiry would first be, What is the character of the man who brings such astonishing, and, in many respects, improbable news? Is he an honest man, or is he a mere hireling of some newspaper, who is paid for any exciting intelligence he may bring, and who may either have formed this story without any foundation, or greatly exaggerated it?

Having decided these questions, it would next be asked, Is this the testimony of an eye-witness, or did the man receive it from common report, by which it may have grown from a few slight circumstances into its present form? And, perhaps the man, if he were honest, would come forward and say, "I did not exactly witness these transactions; but being in the country near Paris, the people flocked out in great numbers, and from many contradictory stories, I gathered what I have reported, and which I *believe* to be true." Or he might say, that, standing on an eminence not far from the city, he saw a great commotion in its streets. The soldiers were gathering about the palace, and parading in haste to the principal points of defence. The citizens also thronged the residence of the king, and appeared to enter within the doors. Suddenly when he expected to hear the roar of musketry and the thunder of cannon, the soldiers

and people seemed mingled in a friendly mass, and personages resembling the royal family were seen escaping as fugitives from the city.

This last statement concerning the circumstances under which he saw the transaction would give rise to a third question, namely, whether the distance at which he witnessed these circumstances was such as to make it quite probable that he observed accurately. If he only saw a commotion of the soldiers and people, which he supposed to be a threatened battle, and then a friendly mingling; and if he saw persons who from some not very remarkable characteristics seemed to be the royal family, but might have been some other persons of rank, then the face of the whole affair is changed. He might easily have been mistaken.

But if he states that, being in Paris, near the palace, he saw the attack of the people in great anger;—heard the cause of their discontent proclaimed about by them; noticed the command to the soldiers to disperse the multitude, and saw them refuse, and finally, with shouts, join the citizens, and following the wishes of the people as they surrounded and secured the palace; saw them go in, and saw the throne of state tumbled from the window; and if to all this he adds that he saw the king come out of a private gate, and hastily enter a carriage and drive off; that he had the honour of being in his company frequently; he addressed a

few words of condolence to him as he passed, and received his card, the only token of friendship which he happened to have :—Such a statement would have made a different impression.

We will now state the three points distinctly. The bearer of the news is a person of well-known character for honesty ; he is not a reckless, hired news-monger. This establishes the *first* point, “*Is he honest?*” (2.) We have *his own testimony*, and not some common rumour which comes at second or third hands. This is the second question, “*Is it the very statement made by the author of the report?*” (3.) And, lastly, we have it plainly declared that he was not on a distant eminence seeing indistinctly the transaction, but was in the street and near the place, where he could see and hear every particular. This is the third point, “*Was he in circumstances to know what he stated?*”

When any important fact is to be proved, we ask these three important questions, which must be answered fully before the point is established. We will place them in order, as follows :—

1. Have we the exact account given by the witnesses themselves?
2. Were they honest men?
3. Were they in a situation to know certainly what they stated?

But if the events happened a great many years ago, and the eye-witnesses are all dead, we must



then resort to their written testimony, proved to be their's by undoubted evidence. The following case will illustrate the manner in which this is done.

More than three hundred years have passed away since a very extraordinary man, named Martin Luther, lived in Germany. He was at first a monk in the papal church, and was very much devoted to that corrupt form of Christianity. But he found in its austerities and ceremonies no peace for a mind convinced of its sinfulness in the sight of God. After much inward perplexity, Providence placed in his hands a Bible. He read it, and learned that the way of salvation is by faith in Christ, and not by any works of righteousness which man can do. His sorrow was turned into joy. He began immediately, like Saul of Tarsus, to preach the way of salvation by faith alone. He attacked the wicked practices of the papal church. The pope sent his ministers to turn him from his new faith. They met him in a public discussion. They persuaded, flattered, and threatened him. But all did not avail. He continued to write, and preach, and debate, until the pope upon his throne trembled. A great reformation in religion, commenced by him and his companions in labour, spread through Germany, Switzerland, France and England; and to this day, the world rejoices in its influence.

A life of Luther has lately been written by the Rev. Dr. Sears, of Boston, Massachusetts, which is,

or should be in all of our Sunday-schools. My readers have read it, I hope, or they can go to their libraries and get it and read it. Dr. Sears professes to give an accurate account of the doctrines which Luther taught, of the manner in which his public life was spent; and in many cases he professes to give the very words which he uttered. No one, as I am aware, doubts that he does, in truth, do all this.

The question which I wish the reader to consider is, how can Dr. Sears, three hundred years after Luther's death, know all these facts? This question is answered in his history. Among many other books from which he obtained his information, he refers to a certain old "Life of Luther," written by Luther's personal and intimate friend, Philip Melancthon. This biography was published during the life of many who knew Luther, both friends and enemies, and its statements were not disputed. To get the materials out of which to prepare his history, Dr. Sears went to Germany, and travelled over all parts of the country where Luther is said to have lived and preached, saw the places of most interest connected with the extraordinary incidents of his career, and collected medals that were struck in honour of his life and memory. He also finds many authors quoting from this work of Melancthon, and some of those who lived very nearly at the same period.

We will then suppose that Dr. Sears goes into France while writing his history, and finds histories

of "The Reformation," written by Papists and Protestants, published at different periods, all quoting, more or less, from this Life of Luther by Melancthon. He enters England, searches the old libraries, and finds many English writers, some of these having lived very near Luther's day, quoting this very life of him by his friend Melancthon. He compares the quotations, and finds that, put together, they make nearly the whole life, and that they agree with each other, German, French, and English authors, and agree also with the copy of "Luther's Life by Melancthon," which professes to have been copied, from time to time, from the very one which the author wrote with his own hands.

Now would it not be *very*, VERY strange that all these authors, of different ages and different countries, some friends, and some enemies to Luther, in quoting from Melancthon's Life of Luther, should agree, if it was not the very same biography which Melancthon wrote. But Melancthon saw and knew what he wrote about, and this is the way in which the statements of the eye-witness are obtained, though he may have been dead many hundred years. I shall show, in the next section, that in this way, though by much stronger proof, we know what the manner of Christ's life was, what were the doctrines he taught, and the miracles he performed.

We might take up the second question again, and applying it to this case, ask "Was Melancthon

honest?" To this Dr. Sears would doubtless answer by pointing to the fact that even his enemies did not call in question his honesty in his lifetime with regard to these statements. Besides he got nothing but reproach for espousing Luther's cause, and lost the favour of the rich, the learned, and the great. He had no reason for dishonesty.

We might apply the third question, and ask, "Was Melancthon in a situation to know certainly what he stated?" We have already answered this, by saying that he was the companion and confident friend of Luther during nearly his whole life, at least during that part of it concerning which he writes.

SECTION II.—*Have we the very Statements of the Authors of the New Testament?*

WE have a brief life of Jesus Christ by four authors, whose names are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Besides these, we have twenty-three other books, teaching the same doctrines which he taught—all professing to be written not far from the same time, constituting unitedly what we call the New Testament. These twenty-three books were written by Paul, James, Peter, Jude and John. Is the book which we call the New Testament just what they wrote? This question can be determined in the affirmative, by the same kind of proof which showed that the old "Life of Luther" was the one written by Melancthon.

If we go to Rome, in Italy, we shall find in the libraries there, many books, written by different Italian authors of every age, back to Clement of Rome, who had seen the apostles and conversed with them,* all of whom refer to these sacred books, and quote freely from them. If we search the ancient libraries of France, we shall find authors making numerous quotations from the same books up to the celebrated Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, who lived but a short time after the death of the apostle John. If we go to Africa, we find a series of writers bearing the same testimony up to Tertullian, in the second century. A fourth series are found in Syria up to Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, in A. D. 107. A fifth are found in Asia Minor, up to Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna.

If I should gather together these many hundreds of books, and find in them quotations from our New Testament, so numerous, that together they made nearly the whole volume, and should find that the quotations agreed with each other, and that they also agreed with copies of this Testament which professed to be handed down from the apostles, I should have a right to say, "Our Testament contains the original writings of its authors." How could these writers, many of them enemies to the Christian religion, and enemies to each other,

* Phil. iv. 3.

living in different countries and ages, and writing in different languages, agree, unless they all quoted from the same books, and those are the same books which we have. These many writings to which I have referred have been found and read by learned men, and we believe the statement of their existence upon the same grounds that we believe the statement that different writers have quoted from the old Life of Luther by Melancthon.

But if we turn from the quotations, and examine the Life of Christ and his doctrines, that is the New Testament itself, and trace its history, we shall find still more astonishing proof that we have the original testimony which we desire. Less than one hundred years ago, some opposers of the Bible declared that it had been so altered since it was first written, that it was now very different from what it was eighteen hundred years ago. They said that the different copies and the various libraries of the ancient churches differed in many thousand passages. This led pious and learned men to devote their whole lives to the business of collecting all the manuscripts of the various books of the Scriptures, and comparing them together. After many years of incredible labour, they found, in various parts of the world, nearly five hundred of these manuscripts; and, instead of many thousand differences, they found that they were so much alike that they all taught the same doctrine;

that they differed scarcely at all, except in the orthography and use of words which meant the same thing; and that even these disagreements were few, and confined generally to two or three manuscripts, while the greatest number were just alike. The reader will find the specimen of these differences, which I am about to give, very interesting and remarkable. I will copy from the "Inspiration of the Bible, by Gaussen," every variation in the Epistle to the Romans, that has been found in all the ancient manuscripts of the world. In one column is the received translation, and in the other the variations.

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

*Received translation.**Variations.*

VERSE

CHAPTER I.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 16. Of the gospel of Christ. | Of the gospel. |
| 24. Wherefore also. | Wherefore. |
| 29. Of injustice, of impurity, of wickedness. | Of injustice, of wickedness. |
| 31. Without natural affection, implacable, without mercy. | Without natural affection, without mercy. |

CHAPTER III.

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 22. To all, and upon all them that believe. | To all them that believe. |
| 28. We then conclude. | We conclude in fact. |

CHAPTER IV.

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Abraham our father. | Abraham our ancestor. |
| 19. And not being weak in faith, he looked not at, &c. | He looked not, feeble in faith, to |

CHAPTER VII.

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 6. That in which being dead. | Being dead to that in which. |
| 26. I render thanks to God. | Thanks be to God. |

CHAPTER VIII.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 11. By his Spirit. | On account of his spirit. |
| 26. To our infirmities. | To our infirmity. |
| Prays for us, with groanings, | Prays with groanings. |

CHAPTER IX.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| 31. Works of the law. | Works. |
| 32. For they. | They. |
| 33. Whosoever. | Who. |

CHAPTER X.

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. For Israel. | For them (referring to Israel.) |
|----------------|---------------------------------|

CHAPTER XI.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2. Against Israel, saying, Lord. | Against Israel, Lord. |
| 6. If it is by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace; but if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work. | If it is by grace, is no more by works; otherwise grace is no more grace. |
| 30. You yourselves were. | You were. |

CHAPTER XII.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 11. Serving the Lord. | Serving the opportunity. |
| 20. If then thine enemy. | If thine enemy. |

CHAPTER XIII.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 9. Thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet. | Thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not covet. |
|---|---|

CHAPTER XV.

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|--|--|
| 7. Received you. | Received us. |
| 8. Now I say. | For I say. |
| 19. Of the Spirit of God. | Of the Spirit. |
| 24. I will go towards you when I shall depart to go into Spain, and I hope to see you. | When I shall depart to go into Spain, I hope to see you. |
| 29. With abundance of blessings from the gospel of Christ. | With abundance of Christ's benediction. |

CHAPTER XVI.

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| 3. Priscilla. | Prisca. |
| 5. Of Achaia. | Of Asia. |
| 6. For us. | For you. |
| 18. Our Lord Jesus Christ. | Our Lord Christ. |

Here are all the corrections of the Epistle to the Romans, one of the longest and most important books in the sacred volume, having four hundred and thirty-three verses, and ninety-six Greek words not found in any other part of the New Testament. And no other book has any more corrections than this !

“Such is the astonishing preservation of the Greek manuscripts, in which has been transmitted to us the New Testament. After having been copied and re-copied so many times in Asia, Europe, and Africa; in convents, in colleges, in palaces, or in parsonages; and that almost without interruption for fifteen hundred years; after that, during the last three centuries, and especially the last hundred and thirty years, so many noble characters, so many ingenious minds, so many learned lives have been consumed in labours till then unrivalled in their extent, and admirable in their sagacity; after all the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, buried in private, or monastic, or public libraries, both Eastern and Western, have been searched; after they have compared with them not only all the ancient versions of the Scriptures, but also all the ancient fathers who have cited them in their innumerable writings, both in Latin and in Greek; after so many researches, see, by our specimen, what they have been able to find !”

Surely we have the original testimony of the writers of the New Testament.

SECTION III.—*Were the Writers of the New Testament honest?*

I have said much about the history of "The Reformation" as it is called, and of Martin Luther, its great author under God, in illustration of this subject. I will refer to it further in illustration of this section, because I suppose my readers are acquainted with its history. Let us suppose that a person rises up and says, "I allow that Dr. Sears, has given us the life and doctrines of Luther just as Melancthon and other friends of his wrote them; but they were dishonest men. They were interested in writing as they did; they had their own private ends to secure." In answer, Dr. Sears may say, "How could that be? Melancthon was educated and lived a papist, strongly attached to the church of Rome up to the time that Luther began to preach his peculiar doctrines and perform his wonderful works. In stating what he did, he went against all the prejudices of his youth and all the strength of his long cherished notions of religion." And he might further say, that this Melancthon was slow, in many cases, to receive Luther's doctrine, and even at one time came near conceding all that Luther had opposed in the papal church, for the sake of reconciliation with it. Still further, that this Melancthon had every reason, of a selfish kind, to hide the truth rather than publish it. His life was

every moment endangered by what he did. Many of his friends were tortured in the most cruel way ; some died a lingering death at the hands of their common enemies. From being honoured, his name was everywhere cast out as evil. Besides all this, Melancthon's enemies never charged him with dishonesty. *They believed, living in his own day and having it in their power to disprove every statement he made of Luther's life and doctrines, if they were untrue. But even they believed what he stated as facts,* though they tried to refer them to wrong motives, or to put an injurious construction upon them. Surely you must say, the charge of dishonesty is not true. Every candid man does say so, for the world believes the whole history.

Let us apply this reasoning to the writers of the New Testament. "Were they honest?"—Did they write what they believed to be true? I answer, the writers were Jews, the very people, of all others, most opposed to Christ, and to all he taught. Their early prejudices and long cherished notions of religion were all against what they wrote. They were slow to believe his claims to be the Messiah, and opposed his doctrines, up to the very time of his death. They were told by Christ himself, that the world would hate them—that in it they should have tribulation—and that whosoever killed them would think he did God service. This they soon found to be true. They suffered the loss of all things, even

of life itself, yet they persisted in their testimony—a testimony not concerning a religious faith mainly, but of occurrences of which they declared they had been eye-witnesses.

Besides, they speak like honest men. If they are telling that their Master walked upon the sea, that he fed thousands with a few loaves of bread, that he healed the sick or opened the eyes of the blind, raised the dead, they state the facts without a word of comment. When they describe his crucifixion, it is with no expressions of reproach upon his enemies nor of sympathy for the sufferer. "*And there they crucified him,*" is at once the language of simple truthfulness, and of touching simplicity. There is no effort to prevent misapprehension, indicating a fear of detection. So far from it, there is almost a careless ease manifested, where we should suppose they must know every word would be sifted and weighed. And lastly, they speak of their own faults and hold themselves up to the world, in connection with the history they write, often in the most unfavourable view. Could all this be if they were dishonest men?

Similar facts connected with other historical books have been received with unhesitating confidence by the world. When the writers of the New Testament put forth claims to honesty upon similar evidence, the world, to be consistent, must not doubt their statements.

SECTION IV.—*Were these Writers in a Situation to know certainly what they state?*

WE need say but few words under this head. If we have proved, as we think we have, that the gospel contains the real testimony of the witnesses, and that they were honest, then we must believe them when they say that they were Christ's companions in his travels, and during his entire ministry; that they were upon the water with him; that they heard his command to the waves "Be still," and saw the calm which ensued; that they handled "the few loaves" which he blessed, gave them to the multitude, and took up the twelve baskets of fragments; that they knew Lazarus who was sick, saw his weeping sisters, and heard the testimony (undenied by opposing Jews) "that he has been dead four days already;" that they heard his command to the dead to "come forth," and saw their friend Lazarus start up from the tomb with his grave-clothes on; in short, no miracle was hidden from them,—nothing was done in secret; they saw him dragged away to Pilate's bar; they witnessed his toilsome journey to Calvary; they beheld him hanging upon the tree; they saw the darkness, felt the shock of the earthquake, and heard his expiring prayer! In company with watchful enemies, they looked upon his lifeless body. On the third day after his resurrection some of their company saw him alive, and through the space of forty days after, they all saw

him frequently and at different places—they ate with him—handled his body—heard him converse; and finally they stood “gazing up into heaven” while he ascended in a cloud in the sight of an assembly of more than five hundred persons.

Surely, they were more than dishonest, they were above expression wicked in heart and life, if they did not see what they declare they saw. And moreover, such assertions if not true, would have been contradicted at the very time they were made.

SECTION V.—*The Testimony of the Writers of the New Testament confirmed.*

IF a man should be tried in a court of justice for stealing, and two men of good character should testify that they saw him in the very act, and there should be no conflicting testimony, the jury would be fully satisfied of his guilt. But still, if some pieces of money known to be the same that were stolen were found about his person, this circumstance would be regarded as a strong confirmation of the testimony.

We have probably all read the history of the battle of Bunker Hill with great interest. We have fancied we could see Charlestown wrapt in devouring flames, and hear the roar of musketry and cannon from the surrounding heights. Who ever doubted the correctness of the history? But if you should go on to that same battle-ground,

and gaze upon the noble granite monument whose top rises towards the clouds, you would feel that here is an evidence that such a battle was fought, confirming the historical statement. So long as that pile stands, defying the winds and storms, so long will it defy all unbelief of the event it commemorates.

More than three thousand years ago the sacred historian recorded the fact, that in one night all the first-born, both of man and beasts, of the Egyptians were slain, and that the first-born of the Israelites, in the same land, were spared. Now if you should chance to find a company of Israelites at this very day, in sufficient numbers to have stated worship—whether they were in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America—you would see them, at a certain period of the year, celebrating the “passing over” of the angel of death, when he spared the first-born of their fathers. If you should visit Egypt, as travellers inform us, you would see the Egyptians at the same period of the year, rising up at midnight, lighting torches and going through their dwellings, howling as if for the dead.* These customs confirm the testimony of the historian.

* It is a matter of common history that the Egyptians were in the habit for thousands of years, even down to modern times, of rising at midnight on a certain day of the year, and lighting candles, going about the house weeping and groaning until midnight.—*Nelson's Cause and Cure of Infidelity*—New York edition, ch. lxiii, 1837, p. 292.

The history of the United States declares, that on the 4th of July, 1776, a "Declaration of Independence" was adopted and publicly announced in the city of Philadelphia. On every successive year since 1776, the 4th of July has been observed in all parts of the United States, by enthusiastic rejoicings; and all this confirms the testimony of history, and will not fail to do so, so long as they are continued.

The writers of Christ's history say that he was crucified—that his body was broken and his blood shed for the sins of the world. They state that on a certain occasion he directed that wine should be drunk and bread eaten by his disciples, in memory of his sufferings and death, to the end of the world. The Christian church, in all ages and countries, to this day have observed this rite or ceremony. It is called "The Lord's Supper." These same writers also state that he commanded all his disciples to be baptized "in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost." In every place where that gospel is known, this solemn sacrament is also observed. Still further, these witnesses affirm that, at the commencement of the preaching of the doctrines of Christ by his disciples, a church was formed and a ministry established as a part of the gospel system. That church and that ministry are found universally, to this day, in connection with that gospel. These are the

monuments of the events which they have recorded—the confirmation of their testimony. When Christians partake of the bread and wine, they do “show forth the Lord’s death;”—in baptism they acknowledge that they believe in Christ for salvation. Thus they have done in all ages. It would be as reasonable for Americans to doubt that our independence was declared on the 4th of July, 1776—though each return of the day is distinguished by the nation’s joy in commemoration of that event—as to doubt that Christ was crucified, when they see the memorials of his death in these sacred solemnities of his professed followers.

SECTION VI.—*Concerning the Testimony of the Writers of the Old Testament.*

WE have shown that we have the writings of the authors of the New Testament, unimpaired; that they were honest men, and had ample opportunity to *know* what they wrote.

Now, the New Testament writers speak of the Old Testament as God’s Book. They quote from almost every part of it, calling it the “holy Scriptures,” and say it is all given by “inspiration of God,” and that “holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

As soon as we commence the book of Matthew, we find an account of the ancestors of Christ, preserved in the Old Testament. The prophets are

referred to immediately; and Christ says, "All things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and in the Psalms, and in the Prophets, concerning me," thus recognising the three general divisions of the Old Testament, viz.:—1. The historical books. 2. The poetical writings. 3. The writings of the prophets.

The manuscripts of the Old Testament have been preserved in the same wonderful manner as those of the New, and their authors afford the same evidence of honesty, and had the same abundant opportunity to know what they testified. Therefore, if we receive the testimony of the writers of one, we must receive that of the others.



TOWER III.

EVIDENCE FROM MIRACLES.

SECTION I.—*General Illustration of the Subject of Miracles.*

MANY great and wonderful things are done by man which are not miracles. I will endeavour to illustrate the difference between such acts and those which are called miraculous.

When, on November 7, 1848, the three millions of voters in the United States were going to the ballot-box to elect a President or Chief Magistrate, each section of the country was anxious to hear from the other. As the election was on the same day in all parts of the land, every means were, of course, used to convey the news of the result as speedily as possible. Probably these votes were not counted earlier than 3 o'clock, P. M., in any place. At 10 o'clock, A. M., the *next day*, (in about nineteen hours,) the people in the centre of Massachusetts received returns from all the Eastern and Middle States, with the returns from the large CITIES of

most of the Western and Southern States, sufficiently full from each to determine their general character. When we remember the many *thousands* of miles that part of this intelligence had to come, the wide extent of country from which it was collected, and the out-of-the-way position of hundreds of the towns and cities, we shall be obliged to acknowledge that it was a *great and wonderful* circumstance.

Our readers understand, at once, how this intelligence was conveyed. The Magnetic Telegraph wrought the wonder. If we had entered the telegraph office in Cincinnati at the time, we should have seen a man at work, at a very curious piece of machinery. Tick! tick! tick! and in the twinkling of an eye the news is at Pittsburg. Tick! tick! tick! again goes the curious instrument, and the votes are all recorded at Philadelphia. Thus after a few *ticks*, the printers in Boston are setting up the returns from the most distant city of the West, situated in what but a few years ago was considered an almost inaccessible wilderness. Thus men speed their thoughts through the length and breadth of our vast country, on the wings of the lightning.

Go into the mills of one of our large manufacturing cities. How like a thing of life does the machinery move! The large and small wheels, the shuttles, the spindles, and even the material which is manufactured, seem to know their place, and to move with the order, precision and understanding

of living creatures. A few men and young women, or perhaps small boys, stand around watching the operations, as if only prompting or suggesting what equal minds were doing. From the raw cotton we soon see the elegantly baled cloth,—or from the roughest looking material, the most beautifully wrought carpet,—or from dirty rags, the finest writing paper.

Now let us look at the nature of these wonderful operations. Without attempting to explain them fully, we can state a few of the principles connected with them. God has made a very subtle fluid, called electricity, remarkable for the rapidity of its motion. Man, by his power of mind which his Creator has conferred upon him, has contrived to use this fluid to convey intelligence, by the same wisdom that led him to use water to turn his wheels, and steam to propel his cars. This fluid is subject to *laws* or invariable rules, just as water and steam are. When he has ascertained the nature of this agent and the laws which govern it, he applies it to a certain purpose. It becomes a piece of common knowledge among men, and is made to work on with frequent improvements from age to age. So in the manufactory. Here are contrivances which will doubtless continue to be used in the same way, for the same purposes, so long as men have any interest in employing them.

It is related by Weems, as one of the traditions about George Washington, that when he was a small

boy, his father adopted a very wise plan to impress upon his mind the great truth that there is a God who made all things. The story may be used, on such authority as we have, for a very different, though, I think, an equally appropriate purpose. George, one day, came running, out of breath, to his father, exclaiming, "Father! O father! Do come and see what I have found in the garden. You never saw any thing so wonderful! Do come quick." Taking his father by the arm, he pulled him along into the garden, his eyes all the while sparkling with delight, and showed him, marked out by green plants, just shooting from the ground, the name of "George Washington." "There, father," said he, "did you ever see any thing like it? My name growing in this bed!"

Well might he be surprised at so unusual a sight. But any of my readers who can write can go into the garden in the spring, and prepare a piece of ground by breaking the earth up and giving it a fine even surface, and then in the mellow soil mark out a name. We may then drop into the lines which are so marked some flower or vegetable seeds, and, of course, they will come up in the shape of the name. All this happens according to established laws of nature.

I will now attempt to explain the difference between these wonderful things and miracles. If the man who arranges the telegraphs in this country, instead of using the laws God has fixed, and

by which electricity is governed, should have stood in the city of Cincinnati, and pointing to a cloud from which the lightning was flashing, have said, "Let that lightning record the votes of this city this moment, in the Boston Post Office;" and if the lightning had obeyed, so that the result of the Western elections had been known in a few hours throughout New England, *that* would have been a miracle. Or, if the same person professing to teach some great truth, sent directly from God, had performed this act in the presence of the citizens of Cincinnati, and for the purpose of proving that God sent him to teach that truth, then it would have been a miracle, and of the same character with those recorded in the Bible.

If some great machinist should enter a manufactory, and, instead of fitting one wheel to another, or placing some band so as to move distant and different sets of wheels, using well-known rules all the way through, and applying the power of water or steam, to set them in motion, should touch the bales of raw cotton and say, "Let these become bales of cloth, ready for the market," and they should become such, that would be a miracle. He would use no laws by which God has made it possible for man to change raw cotton into cloth, but the result would be contrary to such laws. Nor could another man do the same, though he should have seen the manner in which the machinist stretched out his hand, and heard the very words

and tone which he used, and should stand in the same spot and imitate him perfectly.

If Washington's father had taken his little son into the garden in the month of January, and, taking his cane, had marked his name on the ground, and said, "Let green plants spring up instantly in the marks which I make"—and the name had immediately appeared, to the delight and surprise of his son, that would have been a miracle. He would have used none of the laws which God has established, to govern the springing forth of plants, but he would have acted above or contrary to those laws.

Dr. Franklin sent up a paper kite among the clouds when they were black, and all ready to discharge their electric fluid, and drew the lightning down, all according to a law of attraction which God had given it. He did not command it to come; and any scientific man or boy can at any time do the same. Robert Fulton entered a boat on the Hudson river, and, after great toil and study and expense, applied the power of steam according to law, and propelled the boat against the current. He did not stand and command the boat to sail up the river.

Men make plants grow in the coldest weather, and cause water to become ice in summer, but it is by God's laws. When then the known laws which God has made in nature are set aside, or suspended, the result is called a miracle. As we have shown,

no matter how great and wonderful an event it is, if it be in accordance with known laws, we cannot call it miraculous.

If a man pretends to work a miracle, it must be before men that they may see it, and be that kind of an act which they can understand. If a person should stand and order the course of the lightning before all who might assemble to see him, they could judge of the act; and if all the citizens of Boston read the intelligence of the election, as we just now supposed, in the next half hour, they could judge of that fact.

If a philosopher should stand with a multitude of persons on the banks of a stream, at an appointed hour, and command the water to leave its channel, and ascend in a column two hundred feet through the air, the people could judge of such an act. They could as easily tell that the water ascended, as they can that it runs in its natural channel. Men are then capable of judging when a miracle is wrought. But if these or like acts are done, they must be by the power of God. No created being can do any thing contrary to the laws of nature, as established by Him who made all things.

But nobody who believes in a God doubts that he can set aside his own laws, or suspend them. It is as easy for him, and as much his right, to roll the sun back in its apparent course, as to make it go

forward—to cause plants to grow as well in winter as in summer, or bread to be made of stones as well as of wheat. But will he ever do so? The witnesses whose testimony is recorded in the Bible say he has done so, and we have proved that we have their uncorrupted testimony, and that they had every motive to speak the truth. Yet we are not called upon to believe that God will violate his own laws without good reasons. He has good reasons for doing all that he does in the ordinary course of nature, and very many of these reasons are plain to every thoughtful person. The reason why, in a particular case, he seems not to observe them, may be equally plain. Such is the case with the miracles of the Scriptures. Men say they are taught certain things of God—about heaven and hell, holiness and sin, which are very important, and which men never did, or could find out of themselves. How do we know that Paul, for instance, is taught of God, or is not mistaken, when he says that God has told him to declare that “a man is justified by faith, and not by works?” We know by the miracles he performs, and which he performs on purpose to show that God is with him and teaches him. God would not work through him in setting aside or suspending his own laws, if he were a fanatic or a liar.

A certain pretended teacher of the community called Mormons, once called on a friend of mine. He tried to convince him that Mormonism is true, and

that he had a new revelation from heaven. This friend heard his arguments and doctrines very quietly, and when the impostor closed, calmly said, "If you have a new revelation, you can work a miracle." "Well," said the other, "I can." "Well, then," said my friend, "here is an arm which has been withered ever since I was a boy. It has no vitality. It is past all cure. Speak the word and heal this arm, and I will believe your doctrines and espouse your cause." The false teacher hastened away in confusion. But when Christ called upon the people to believe that he was the Messiah foretold by the prophets, he admitted at the same time that the Messiah was to do many great and miraculous works, and he proved his Messiahship by doing them. Thus did the apostles and early Christians who were commissioned to make known more fully Christ's doctrines. We have now illustrated these important facts which I will repeat connectedly.

1. A miracle is something not in accordance with the laws of nature and consequently can be done only by the immediate agency of God.

2. To deserve credit, it must be done openly, and be such in its nature as that people may clearly apprehend.

3. It must be done to confirm some doctrine claimed to be from God, and by the instrumentality of the person claiming to teach that doctrine.

SECTION II.—*The Miracles of Moses.*

I SHALL only notice a few of the many extraordinary acts of "Moses, the man of God." The reader can turn to the 7th chapter of Exodus and the chapters which follow, and read the history of all his miracles, to bring afresh to his mind their astonishing character.

The first to which I shall call attention is "The turning of the waters into blood." Moses was sent by Jehovah to request Pharaoh to let his people go out of Egypt that they might worship him. The first object of Moses, in fulfilling his commission, was to convince Pharaoh and his subjects, as well as the children of Israel, that the Lord only was God. The Lord said when Moses was about to work a miracle, "In this thou shalt know that I am the Lord." Aaron, at the command of Moses, stretched forth his rod and smote the waters that were in the river, and "all the water that was in the river was turned into blood. And all the Egyptians loathed the water, and the fish in it died."

In this miracle we notice the fact, that it was such a one as all the people could know and appreciate. The Nile, the river which was turned into blood, and which became so loathsome, was held in great veneration; its waters were peculiarly excellent, and it was the entire dependence of the people to render their land productive. They

could not, therefore, but know that this miracle was wrought.

There was a reason for its being done, namely—to convince that generation, as well as all coming generations, that Israel's God was the only God, and that he spoke in his word by Moses; and lastly, it was done by the agency of Moses, who professed to teach the will of God. That the water of a mighty river should be turned into blood by the word of man, is surely not in accordance with any known law which God has made, but contrary to the well-known laws of water. God only could have done this act. It is true, the magicians attempted to imitate it by their tricks, but that it was an unsuccessful attempt is evident from the fact that they soon ceased to contend with Moses and Aaron.

Again, Moses commanded Aaron to lift up his rod, and a darkness so thick that it might be felt pervaded the land of Egypt. But there was at the same time light in all the dwellings of the Israelites, their neighbours. It could not arise from an eclipse, for it lasted *three days*, whereas an eclipse which causes darkness lasts in any one place, but a few moments—and eclipses are not partial, making the dwellings of some dark, and leaving others light. This was a miracle that all could and must know. It was not done in secret, or before a few credulous persons. The effect was general and awful. No one could impose upon a

nation with such an event as this, and none could write it as history, as Moses has done, unless it actually took place.

Another miracle was the slaying of the first-born of man and beasts of the Egyptians, while the families of the Israelites escaped unhurt. If it is according to God's law that many shall die where he sends the plague, it is not according to any law that the first-born only shall die. Such a circumstance besides this was never known. Nor is it according to any law, that those of our own people shall die, and those of another, living among them, shall escape. And this, too, was an event deeply impressed upon the minds of millions of people. It has been kept in continual remembrance by the institution of the Passover among the Jews, and a solemn ceremony among the Egyptians, as already mentioned.

Suppose the cholera should have killed the first-born in every family in Cincinnati or St. Louis, would not that event have been known throughout our country, and would not history record it as most extraordinary? And if the day on which it occurred should be observed as a day of fasting in such a city for the next hundred years, would any future age doubt its reality?

Or suppose some historian, who has partly completed a history of the United States, should affirm that such an event actually did take place in the year 1820, and relate all the circumstances, would any

one believe such a story, or could such a statement be handed down to future ages uncontradicted? Every body would say the cholera never was known in the United States till 1832. It is false.

When the Israelites had escaped from their oppressors, and had arrived at the borders of the sea, their enemies, armed and breathing fearful threatenings, pressed upon their rear, while the wilderness and the sea shut them in. But Moses stretched out his rod, and the sea divided, and the people passed through in safety. The Egyptian army followed, and when they had all entered, the waters returned into their accustomed channels, and destroyed them. God, in this case, made use of an east wind to cause the sea to go back. Now it is according to the laws which govern wind and water, that a "strong east wind" should dry up water, but not that it should dry up a sea in one night. Nor is it according to those laws that the wind should cause the sea to "go back," and the water to stand up upon each side as a wall; neither is it natural for it thus to continue until one people shall pass through its channel "dry-shod," and close upon the army of another when they were attempting to follow.

Suppose Washington with his army, being closely pressed by a superior English force, and crossing the Delaware river in the night, had lifted his sword, pointing to the river, and com-

manded its waters to divide, and they had piled themselves on each side, like a wall of solid stone, until his army had passed through; and suppose the British had attempted to follow, and been drowned in the midst of the river; and let us imagine still further that a very beautiful song had been composed by some officer or soldier in the American army, and had been sung ever since throughout the country in commemoration of the event, would any one doubt that it actually happened? The English nation would know whether they had lost an army, and their national pride would have led them to have contradicted the manner of its loss, if possible; and the whole American army would know whether they crossed the Delaware under the circumstances supposed. No history could, at any time, impose such a transaction upon the world, if it had never happened. Still more remarkable was the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites, for here was a whole nation. Millions of people were actors in this scene, and every one would be a witness for or against the record of the event; and still more impossible would it have been for Moses, or any person, to have fabricated the story.

The last of the Old Testament miracles which I shall mention, is the fall of the manna in the wilderness. By it some millions of the children of Israel were fed for forty years. It fell six days in the week, but on the seventh there was none. If

during five of the days of the week they gathered more than enough for one day, it bred worms, and was spoiled; but that which was gathered on the sixth day, though double in quantity, kept in a wholesome state two days; and the supply ceased altogether when the people arrived in Canaan, where there was corn.

Some parts of Ireland, have been, for a few years past, in a great measure destitute of food, and many of them are known to have starved. If the queen of England, their sovereign, had claimed to have been raised up by God to teach them their duty to him more fully than it is now revealed, and if she had called upon God to send them food from heaven every day, in receiving it directly from the sky, as they now do the rain, they would have known God spake by her. And if it had all the peculiarities of the manna, that is, if it came regularly every day, except that it came on Saturday for Sunday, none being sent on that day, and ceased whenever they could obtain other food, it would have been still more astonishing. Would not all the Irish people have known this was a miracle? They could not be deceived. The English nation would know it, and the world would be filled with the news of such an event. No man could pretend such a thing was true and make men believe it, unless it really was so. It could and would soon be disproved, if it was fabricated. And so of the manna which came from

heaven for three millions of starving people. They could not be deceived, and Moses could not have written it as truth, if it were not known to be so.

SECTION III.—*The Miracles of Christ.*

No being ever appeared in the world, with so imposing a character, or with so high pretensions, as our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. The heavenly hosts rejoiced at his birth. A light, from that moment, dawned in the midst of the deepest darkness of our sin-smitten world. Those that waited “for the consolation of Israel,” from the instant that it was said “A Saviour is given,” exclaimed, “Now lettest thou thy servants depart in peace; for our eyes have seen thy salvation.”

Christ claimed to bring “life and immortality to light”—to possess in himself “all the fulness of the Godhead”—and to be “equal with the Father.” He proclaimed the natural unfitness of man to dwell with God; but offered him salvation in his own name, and as a free gift. He declared this salvation possible, because of the shedding of his own blood as a sacrifice for sin. He promised to be with all his disciples everywhere, even unto the end of the world; and finally, he represented himself as the future judge of the world, and as having the right to admit his faithful people to “sit upon his throne,” and to wear crowns of glory for ever and ever.

Surely no teacher ever made pretensions like these.

It is therefore right that we should expect some "mighty works" to be done by him. In this we are not disappointed. If his claims are great, his character (which we shall consider in due time) and his miracles are still greater and more astonishing.

Since Christ came to take away the *sins* of the world, and it was proclaimed that *peace* should attend his advent, we should expect all his miracles, while they showed his power, should show his goodness too. It would not be consistent for him to call fire from heaven to consume his enemies—to devastate the earth with plagues, nor to show his divinity by blotting out the sun and stars, and shrouding the world in darkness. Nor would it become him to overthrow nations, as a conqueror, and call upon the world to receive his claims, because, by his power, he had put down kings, and discomfited armies.

His claims and the kind of miracles he wrought are consistent. If he wished to show his disciples his power over the winds and the waves, he at the same time removed the cause of their alarm and anxiety. "Why are ye so fearful?" Does he wish to show the multitude that *temporal* as well as *spiritual* gifts are at his disposal? He relieves the present distress of seven thousand, and gives them bread to eat in a wilderness, till they are satisfied. When he would prove that death is subject to him, he restores to life a young man, "the only son of his

mother, and she a widow." To exhibit his control over the powers of darkness, he relieves the excruciating agony of those who were possessed of devils. And at the same time he sought to connect with these blessings to the bodies and minds of men, growing out of his miracles, the comforting assurance that the Son of man had power to forgive sins.

I will select a few examples, from Christ's many miracles, to illustrate the above remarks.

When Jesus was at Capernaum,* there came to him a ruler whose name was Jairus. From his office, he was probably a man of much influence, and therefore the miracles wrought in his behalf would be the more known, and become the subject of general conversation. His only daughter was lying at the point of death. The anxious parents had doubtless watched beside her during the long weary hours of the nights, marking the rapid inroads of disease upon her lately vigorous frame and threatening its speedy dissolution. How could he bear the thought that she must die—the comfort of his manhood, the pride of his advancing years, and the expected prop of his old age? No expense or pains were spared. The most skilful physicians were called. The frantic father was ready to cast

* Matt. ix. 18, and the parallel places in Mark and Luke.

all his worldly substance at their feet, if they would but save his daughter.

Suddenly a ray of hope crossed the father's mind. He remembered, in the extremity of his sorrow, the "Prophet of Nazareth," whose fame had filled the land. He remembered the report of his unexampled goodness; he had seen the blind rejoicing in their restored sight; the lame, whom his benevolence had fed while sitting at his gate begging, had returned from a visit to him, walking and leaping and praising God. The pride of the ruler is lost in the afflicted and subdued parent. He believed in the power of Jesus of Nazareth, and he sets off to urge his immediate presence. He would not trust so important an errand to his servants. He did not hesitate, when he arrived, to pay divine honour to the Saviour, though he knew the Jews would deride him. His heart was deeply smitten while he remembered that his only daughter "lay dying." He earnestly entreated the Saviour to come and heal her.

But while the master turned to perform another benevolent act, the messenger came to announce that the child was really dead! Why need the Saviour be further troubled? they thought. The work of death is done. All hope has vanished. But the Saviour would not suffer that parent's heart long to be wrung with anguish. Looking with tenderness upon him, he said, "Fear not." How timely! How grateful to his sinking spirit!

"Believe only, and she shall be made whole." The parent, accompanied by the Saviour, soon entered his now desolate house. There were many persons present, but Jesus put them forth and went in, and took the maid by the hand, and she arose!

How extensively must the news of so astonishing an event have been circulated through that country! A multitude thronged about the Saviour as he went towards the ruler's house. They knew the errand on which he had come. They heard the messenger say, "Thy daughter is dead." Many of the people entered the house and satisfied themselves she was dead, for when the Saviour said, "She is not dead," (meaning not irrecoverably dead,) thinking he meant she had yet life remaining in her, they derided him. It was such a case as they could understand, and when they saw her arise up and eat before them, they were astonished.

After Jesus had wrought the miracle of the raising of Lazarus from the dead, he journeyed towards Jericho, the city made memorable by the falling of its walls at the sound of the ram's horns of the children of Israel under Joshua. A great multitude accompanied him, for the excitement in consequence of the resurrection of Lazarus was very great. As he drew near unto Jericho, two blind men, who sat by the way-side begging, cried out most earnestly, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us!" They had without doubt heard of the wonder-

ful acts of this far-famed prophet. They had long felt the deep affliction of blindness; but they had considered their case as a hopeless one. "Who ever heard of one that could open the eyes of those who are born blind?" had been, perhaps, the language of their hearts. They had heard men speak of the glorious sun, and of the beauties of nature; they pressed the hand of friendship, and had sighed to look upon the countenances of those they loved.

A rumour had come to them that one Jesus, a prophet, "mighty in deed and in word," had opened, by a touch, the sightless eyes of many an humble suppliant. They may have long sighed to hear the tones of his voice of mercy. But who cares for the unfortunate? They were beggars. Who shall carry them where the Saviour labours? The boon is too great to ask. Their tears must fall in silence.

But they hear the voice of a multitude. They inquire the reason of the trampling of so many feet, "It is Jesus of Nazareth," is the reply. "Jesus of Nazareth!"—The very name sent a thrill of joy through their hearts. As with one voice they cry out, "Son of David, have mercy on us!" There were none to lead them to Christ, but there are many to repulse their importunate application to him. What to the thoughtless multitude who follow Christ through mere curiosity is the blessing of sight, the loss of which they never experienced?

"Be still!" say the by-standers. "Clamour not for

him—He will not notice beggars like you?" Alas! how little of the character of Christ do the world understand! *He* never turned a deaf ear to the voice of earnest supplication. He came for the very purpose of giving sight to the blind, healing the broken-hearted, and preaching the gospel to the poor.

He commanded them to be brought to him. When the *Master* calls, there are those who are ready to help. They catch the infection of his benign spirit. "Be of good cheer; rise, he calleth thee." "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" is the encouraging question. They are not at a loss for an answer. "Lord, open our eyes." They were intent on the great blessing of sight. This was the only opportunity of receiving it they ever would have. They cannot now be denied.

He touched their eyes. They saw instantly. What a change! Hard indeed must have been their hearts if they had felt no disposition to "follow him in the way," praising God. Consider the greatness of this act, *the opening the eyes of men born blind!*—Consider *how public it was*. They sat by the way-side begging. They were well known: and then what a number of witnesses!—in the open street, amidst a crowd of enemies as well as friends.

We have often seen, in one of our large cities, a blind man sitting at the corner of one of the most crowded streets. Perhaps he has a few apples to sell. There he sits, sad, and almost motionless.

The thoughtless pass him, and notice him not. The multitude throng around, earnestly pursuing their schemes of gain or glory. But his position for many years in that same place has caused him to be extensively known, and they all *know* that he is blind. If Jesus were on earth to day, and had made professions of his Messiahship, and should visit that city, and amidst the multitude that were eagerly gazing upon him, some watching with malicious intentions his every act, he should stop, and while this blind man cried out "Open my eyes," he should touch them and restore his sight, how clear would be the proof of his divine power! How would the fact become noised abroad, and how easily could the deception be detected if there had been any attempt to deceive!

Such were the miracles of Christ. The examples we have selected are not, perhaps, the most striking. Where all are so clearly performed by divine power, so astonishing in their character, and so convincing in the proof they afford that they were of God, we had no need to be careful in our selection. Let a few particulars concerning Christ's miracles be remembered.

1. They were generally performed in the most public manner. The chief priests, in many cases, doubtless, and the bitterest enemies of Christ, witnessed them.

2. They were very numerous. It became so notorious that this professed Messiah wrought miracles that the people would naturally be on the watch for

them. This gave all skeptics an opportunity to attend on his ministry, and see his mighty acts for themselves. The Jewish Council could send their most sagacious men, and prove whether or not he possessed this power; a test which they allowed would settle his claims to be sent of God. This they did, they *did* watch him closely, and this leads us to notice another very important fact.

3. Neither the Jewish rulers nor any of that generation attempted to *deny* that Christ raised the dead, healed the sick, fed multitudes with a few loaves, opened the eyes of the blind, and cast out devils. They did indeed say that he cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils. But this was only their very weak and wicked construction of a very plain matter. Our Lord's answer was sufficient to silence them on this point. The devil could not engage in a warfare against himself; he would not be found demolishing his own work. "If Satan be divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand?" The weakness of the objection shows how impossible it was to disprove the divine character of his miracles.

4. They were all of a kind suited to his character and the design of his holy mission. This point we repeat here, because it should impress our minds. Christ's miracles were like himself and like the gospel he preached,—they exhibited the compassion of God to fallen man.

SECTION IV.—*The Resurrection of Christ.*

The Apostle Paul* says, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." He laid much stress on this great truth, in proof of the divine authority of his own preaching. It is the most important, and the most interesting and convincing of all the miracles of the Scriptures. We will examine the account of it briefly :

The Saviour, during his public preaching, had said that he should be betrayed, tried, condemned and crucified, but the third day he would rise again. Thus all his enemies and all who doubted his assertion were put upon their guard against deception. The Jewish rulers who crucified him remembered this saying, and were virtually challenged to prevent or disprove its final accomplishment. The fame of his promised resurrection was as extensively circulated as the report of his wonderful works. How intensely interested then must the whole city have been in the progress of his trial !

As the news of his arrest spread, his enemies doubtless said, "Now we shall see what will become of his promise of living again after the third day." And, among the many who believed on him, there were possibly some who, unlike the twelve, clung to his promise with a steady faith, saying, "He will burst

* 1 Cor. xv. 14.

the bands of death. He will triumph over the grave. I shall see him in his glory !”

Under these circumstances, there could be no mistake in the fact that he was really put to death. His enemies, with malignant satisfaction, saw his body scourged and lacerated. Their own hands bound the thorns about his brow. They followed his weary steps to Calvary, and hung him upon the cross. They triumphed in their hearts when they saw his agony, and cried, “He saved others ; himself he cannot save.” They gazed at him, until they knew that he was really *dead*, for they would first of all be sure that his predicted resurrection should not be a mere resuscitation ; and in addition to the crucifixion, a soldier pierced his side with his spear, making death certain beyond all doubt. But their care stopped not here. They laid him carefully in the tomb. It was his own body ; there could be no mistake about this. They closed the door and rolled against it a heavy stone, and placed a seal upon it. If the disciples had broken that seal, the people would have known it. But to make it still more sure, a guard of Roman soldiers was set to watch the tomb. Their life depended upon their vigilance. While the enemies of Jesus thus thought to defeat the Saviour’s design, they were preparing the strongest proof of the event which he had predicted.

It being certain that the Saviour was dead, they

waited the return of the third day. The tomb was visited, but the body was not there! Could the disciples have stolen him away? So say the chief priests, and thereby they acknowledge that the body is really gone. Was the seal broken? No. Did all the soldiers sleep under such circumstances? Impossible. They were told to say that the disciples came by night and stole the body away while they slept. But how did they know what happened when they were asleep?

The disciples were timid, and had little apprehension of Christ's true character. They had no clear understanding of his resurrection. But some of them, with the women, coming to the tomb early on the first day of the week, found not the body, but were astonished at seeing Christ himself. Again and again he appears to them for the space of forty days, going in and out with them, and conversing about the things of his kingdom. They ate with him. They handled his body. More than five hundred saw him at one time. This is the disciples' story. This account they published at the *very time* of the transaction, when his enemies, the unbelieving Jews, had the fairest opportunity to disprove it. They published the facts at Jerusalem, yes, in the *temple*, in the very ears of those who crucified him—who watched him at his death, and who saw his body laid safely away in the tomb. They could rise up, if it were possible, and

say, "We know your story of his resurrection is not true; we have seen his body since—his dead body—since the third day." Or, upon the first announcement of this, to *them*, unpleasant truth, they could, (if the disciples testified falsely,) hasten at once to the sepulchre, and produce the body.

But no. They adopted no such course. To oppose to the disciples' statement, they have only the testimony of those who allowed that they were asleep at the time. But even this defence is soon abandoned, it being too weak to be insisted upon, and the publishers of Christ's resurrection have the field to themselves. From the Roman governor, and the Jewish high priests, down to the lowest reviler of the name of Christ, not one dared to say, "Your story of the resurrection is false."

The disciples were arrested, scourged, and charged to say no more about the unwelcome truth. Not because they published a lie and deceived the people, but because the rulers were afraid it would stir up the jealousy of the Romans, or excite the rage of the people, who might charge them with the blood of that just person. From the crowded temple of the Jews, and the thronged city of Jerusalem, to the extreme boundaries of the land of Canaan, "Jesus and the resurrection" was proclaimed. Nor did the disciples tarry long among those who accounted themselves unworthy of eternal life; but among the philosophers of Greece, the orators of Rome, the

great and the lowly, the rich and the poor, the bond and the free, of every city and country, the same doctrines were announced. They endured all manner of reproach in attesting this fact. They were derided, imprisoned, and many of them were put to death, yet they persevered to the last in their testimony.

Let the reader recollect that they declared not a religious opinion, such as might or might not be true, but a *fact* which they asserted they had seen with their own eyes.

On this point, an excellent writer says, "It is common for men to die for false opinions. But even in those cases their sufferings are an evidence of their sincerity; and it would be very hard to charge men who die for the doctrine they profess, with insincerity in their profession. Mistaken they may be, but every mistaken man is not a cheat. If we allow the sufferings of the apostles to prove their sincerity, which we cannot well disallow; and consider that they died for the truth of a matter of fact, which they had seen themselves; we shall perceive how strong the evidence is in the case. In doctrines and matters of opinion, men mistake perpetually; and it is no reason why I should take up with another man's opinion, that I am persuaded he is sincere in it. But when a man reports to me an uncommon *fact*, yet such a one as, in its own nature, is plainly an object of sense, if I believe him not,

it is not because I suspect his eyes, or his sense of feeling, but merely because I suspect his sincerity. For if I were to see the same thing myself, I should believe myself; and therefore my suspicion does not arise from the inability of the human senses to judge in the case, but from a doubt of the sincerity of the reporter. In such cases, therefore, there wants nothing to be proved but the sincerity of the reporter; and since voluntary suffering for the truth is, at least, a proof of sincerity, the suffering of the apostles for the truth of the resurrection is a full and unexceptionable proof."

SECTION V.—*Miracles of the early Christians.*

I SHALL but allude to the miracles wrought by those who claimed to be commissioned by God to carry out the great work of men's salvation, by publishing in all the world the glad news of the gospel. Some of these Christians wrote a part of the Bible. We receive their words as from God. If, then, they really did such works as no man could do, we have the proof that they were inspired, and, as they were the witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it serves as an additional evidence that that great miracle was wrought.

Let us turn to the 2d chapter of the Acts. It was the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem. "There were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out

of every nation under heaven." Their minds had been filled with the fame of Jesus. They had been informed of his death, and had heard the report also that he was risen again. No doubt they were skeptical, if not full of animosity against the professed Messiah. Now it was noised abroad that the disciples of this Jesus were filled with divine power. Public curiosity was immediately excited. People ran together to the place where the disciples were assembled, and were amazed to hear them—unlearned men as they were—speak each in his own language; as if a convention of Frenchmen, Austrians, Italians, Spaniards, Japanese, and Sandwich Islanders, should be assembled in New York to attend the May meetings, and half a dozen unlettered American fishermen should come in and address them in the language of their respective countries. Here was a fact of which all could judge. It occurred at Jerusalem, at the time when that city was filled with people. It was therefore known to thousands. It was wrought by those who now began to preach the gospel.

Of the same character—clearly miraculous and extensively known—were all the miracles of the early Christians. They spake, therefore, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

I have thus briefly laid before the reader the subject of the miracles of the Bible. How astonishing their nature! How great their variety. How be-

nevolent their character, and at the same time how convincing is their testimony! The finger of God is clearly seen in them all. The voice of Jehovah is heard through them calling upon men to listen. The will of God is plainly made known in connection with them, so that they, to whom the Bible comes, may take it as a light to guide them safely to heaven.



TOWER IV.

EVIDENCE FROM PROPHECY.

SECTION I.—*What is Prophecy?*

NOT a great many years since, the rich and fashionable people of Boston erected a beautiful building in one of the most frequented streets, and dedicated it to theatrical performances. Thither they hoped the young and the gay, the rich and the influential, would resort, and sustain the reputation of such amusements. While pleasure-seekers rejoiced in the enterprise, the pious mourned. They saw in it the means of the ruin of many promising youth. A clergyman was at that time officiating as pastor of a church in that city. With regard to this theatre he remarked, (and the observation became generally known,) "*I shall yet preach the gospel in that building.*"

Years rolled on. The pastor removed to a Western city, and the theatre continued to be crowded with its votaries. But the gospel was at the same

time exerting its silent and powerful influence upon the community. The interest in theatrical amusements began, at length, to wane, and the temples of God were filled with attentive worshippers. The gain of those who owned the theatre was gone, and it was sold to a society of Christians, to be consecrated to the service of Almighty God. The pastor was visiting his old friends in Boston, at the time the purchase was completed, and he preached the first sermon within its capacious walls. I was favoured with the privilege of hearing that sermon. The venerable man of God stood upon the stage, where the actors had been accustomed to perform for the amusement of a thoughtless multitude, with many of the decorations of the theatre remaining in the building, and proclaimed the unsearchable riches of Christ. Before him sat an aged and distinguished friend in the ministry, around him were the pastors of perhaps fifty churches, and, crammed into every part of the house, was a listening audience.

In commencing his discourse, the pastor pleasantly remarked, alluding to the prediction above mentioned, "I was not quite so sure it would take place, as I am now."

My readers will not understand me to present this incident as an example of a prophecy like those the prophets of the Bible uttered. I have introduced it to point out the difference between such a prediction and a Scripture prophecy.

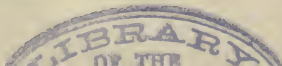
The pastor formed an opinion concerning the theatre from the probable course of events. He did not *know* that it would take place.

But suppose he had said, that in 1843, on the 5th day of September, a Society of the Baptist denomination would purchase the house; that upon the very stage on which plays had been performed for twenty-five years, with all the theatrical decorations about him, he should preach to a crowded house on a certain day; that an aged minister, whose name he gave, should sit before him with a hearing trumpet at his ear, while many clergymen, as yet but mere boys, all of whom he named, describing their characters and person, should stand around him; and if all these particulars happened with the exception, perhaps, of the precise date, exactly as he had stated them twenty-five years before, we should exclaim, "God must have directly communicated these facts to him. It is a prophecy."

Here would be a great many little particulars which no one could know would happen at the very time, and under the very circumstances in which they did happen, and yet all were minutely predicted.

Suppose one of the pilgrim fathers of New England, on landing upon the rock of Plymouth, amidst the snows of an unusually severe winter, surrounded by an unexplored and boundless forest, through which the red man yet roved with unrestrained freedom, had made the following statement:

From the ocean upon the east to the ocean upon the west, and from the wonderful lakes and the unequalled cataract of the north to the salt water that washes the southern shore, the white men shall be in numbers as the leaves of the forest. While yet they are but three millions, war shall arise, and they shall fight against their rulers. There shall be a great and a good man raised up, whose name will be called Washington, and he shall lead their armies to victory, after enduring incredible hardships, and surmounting innumerable difficulties. Seven years shall the war rage, and then shall the people be free. Thirteen distinct governments shall be formed, and they shall be called state governments; and a general government shall be established, and the people shall choose their own rulers and make their own laws according to a determined constitution, and Washington shall be elected the first president. He shall rule with great wisdom and popularity, and then shall he retire, and a man named Adams shall succeed him in office. The people shall increase greatly in numbers and power, and there shall be great convulsions in the old world, and war shall occur between this country and Great Britain, which shall last three years. And while men shall be yet living who conversed with Washington, the number of the states shall increase to thirty, and the people shall be more than twenty millions.



Now will the reader notice several particulars of this supposed case? The boundaries of the country are given, and the incidental particulars of "wonderful lakes," and "unequalled cataract," not yet known to him who spoke these words. The duration of the war is given, and the name of the deliverer and first president. Thirteen states are mentioned, and not a greater or less number. The nature of the new government, that it shall be a republic and not a monarchy, is stated. And lastly, the precise number of the states within a given generation, and the popular estimate of the number of the people, are distinctly announced. Let us suppose further, that this statement was published among the writings of this man who professed to teach many truths concerning religion not yet fully understood, and who claimed that he received them directly from God; and that these writings were known by all the Puritans of that generation, and a great many books were written, referring to this statement—some of them referring to it as the fancy of a madman.

Now, no one doubts that God only could enable a man to reveal such facts, and the people of these United States would receive more and more evidence of their truth up to this time. And when the people saw that they were true, they could not reasonably doubt that he who uttered them

was a good man, and that the doctrines he taught were from God.

If I now present statements from the Bible embracing more wonderful particulars, and a greater number than those contained in the above supposed case, every candid reader will allow that God must have revealed them, and that the men by whom they were uttered, were good men, and what they taught must be true.

SECTION II.—*Prophecies concerning the Messiah.*

WHEN Christ was born in Bethlehem of Judah, the whole nation of the Jews expected a person to appear among them—to become greater than any of their former kings or prophets, and to be to them a mighty ruler and saviour. When, therefore, the wise men from the east announced that they had seen the star of him who was to be king of the Jews, Herod, the ruler under the Romans, was troubled, lest this expected king should excite the Jews, whom he governed, to rebel. All Jerusalem was in a state of excitement.

Why was this general expectation? Why had they expected such a man then, rather than a generation sooner or later?

It was because Christ, the Messiah, had been foretold. More than one hundred predictions had been written in their religious books, referring to different circumstances concerning him. They were

written at different periods, but all of them more than four hundred years before that time. All the books containing these predictions had been translated nearly three hundred years before, from Hebrew, the Jews' language, into Greek; and had been, of course, known and talked about, by the friends and enemies of the Jews' religion. I will present a few only of these prophecies—and in such order that they may be read in connection.

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins, and make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and three-score and two weeks.”*

The reader has only to bear in mind that each day stands for a year in this prophecy, and that seventy weeks are four hundred and ninety prophetic days or years—and that “the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem,” refers to the decree of Artaxerxes, contained in Ezra 7th chap. 9th verse.

“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of

* Dan. ix. 24.

thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel.”*

“There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse (or the son of Jesse, that is David), and a branch shall grow out of his roots ; and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and the fear of the Lord.”†

“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped ; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.”‡

“He is despised and rejected of men ; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief ; and we hid, as it were, our faces from him ; he was despised and we esteemed him not.

“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted ; yet he opened not his mouth ; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.”||

In the above prophecies, there are the following particulars stated concerning the Messiah :

1. The exact time of his birth—four hundred and ninety years from the decree of Artaxerxes.
2. The place where he was born—in Bethlehem Ephratah.

* Micah v. 2. † Isaiah xi. 1. ‡ Isaiah xxxv. 5. || Isaiah liii. 3.

3. The tribe from which he should spring—from Judah.

4. The family—from the stem of Jesse—David's father—that is from the family of David.

5. His character—"the spirit of wisdom and understanding rested upon him," etc.

6. The miracles that he should perform—the lame walk, the deaf hear, and the dumb speak.

7. The contempt of those to whom he preached. "He was despised and rejected."

8. A very particular account of his death. "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter," etc.

Now, since we know that Christ was born just at the time stated, in the very place, and of the tribe and family mentioned, and that his character and the miracles he wrought, and the death he suffered, are all as they were foretold, we certainly know that God inspired the men who declared these things. And we know too they must be good men, and what they taught must be true.

SECTION III.—*Prophecy concerning Babylon.*

SOME of my readers may have ascended to the top of the Bunker hill monument, and from that elevation marked the outlines of the city of Boston, with all its adjacent country. Towards the south is its beautiful harbor spotted with sails, and upon every other side are towns of romantic beauty, while the eye passes rapidly over the principal

points of interest in the city itself. Will the reader now ascend with me, in imagination, a tower six hundred feet high, that is, about three times as high as the Bunker hill monument? Though this tower has crumbled into dust, we will suppose it yet stands, where it once stood, in Asia, on the bank of the river Euphrates, or not far from where, on the map, you see the waters of the Tigris, quite near those of the Euphrates. What a splendid view! We are in the centre of the great city of Babylon! We can distinctly see that wall, three hundred and fifty feet high, and twelve miles long on each side, extending entirely around the city. It looks, in the distance, like the dark outline of a regular ridge of hills, shutting in the city from the surrounding plains. See those towers upon each corner, piercing the very clouds! And what beautiful and massive gates open through the walls, twenty-five on each side, and all of solid brass! The streets too, how unlike those of Boston or New York! They are so wide and straight, running from each gate to the one opposite, making fifty streets, dividing the city into such beautiful squares. The houses are not crowded together as they are in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, but each square has richly cultivated gardens.

We may now follow the course of the Euphrates through the very centre of the city, with those high walls upon its banks, and we can see twenty-

five brazen gates upon each side, leading from the river into the streets. We can scarcely discern, at the foot of the tower, those men, appearing no bigger than ants, ascending from the boats, through the gates, into the city. No doubt all these gates, around the city and along the banks of the river, are shut at night, so that no enemy, either from the plains or from boats, can enter. How secure they must feel !

But what a splendid bridge spanning the Euphrates directly below !

Near us, on this side of the river, are large, elegant, though old looking buildings, enclosed by three separate walls, one within the other ; these buildings, says our guide, form the old palace, now forsaken by the royal family for that more expensive and noble one on the opposite side of the river. The new palace, he tells us, is enclosed by a wall eight miles in circumference. But the most remarkable thing about the new palace, is that garden, which seems to be suspended between heaven and earth, which has been raised upon terraces to the height of three hundred and fifty feet, and planted with every thing beautiful. I think its erection must have been a shameful waste of time and labour, and well-fitted to swell the pride of the queen for whom it was made.

Let us now listen to a description of the surrounding country with which we are supplied, and

learn what lies beyond the walls. First, there is an immense ditch filled with water. This was made by removing the earth of which the bricks were made that are used for the walls. It must add greatly to the difficulty of taking the city, for the people of Babylon and their enemies know nothing of bombs, mortars and cannon, which hurl destruction across ditches and over the highest forts. West of the city we shall find an extensive basin forty miles in circumference and thirty-five feet deep, into which the waters of the Euphrates were turned from above the city, in order to build the wall along its banks more conveniently. There are also two canals, through which, when they fear an inundation, they turn the superfluous waters into the Tigris.

Such is this mighty city, Babylon, which, comprehending, as we have stated, a square forty-eight miles around, was at least eight times larger than London and its appendages. These particulars we have in the history written by Herodotus, who visited the city of Babylon. No wonder at her great boasting. She says, "I will be a lady for ever." "I am, and none else besides me. I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children."*

Will this glory ever depart? Will these mighty

* Isa. xlvii. 7. 8.

walls be prostrated, these splendid palaces become the habitation of loathsome reptiles, and these beautiful gardens the haunts of wild beasts? Will this vast area, teeming with busy inhabitants, become so desolate, that even the wild and fearless Arab, who loves to pitch his tent in desert places, will not even tarry here for a night? And will these plains, whose soil is so deep and rich, and whose produce is so abundant, cease to be feeding-places for the flocks of the shepherd? We will stand amidst its greatest wealth and grandeur, while Nebuchadnezzar is revelling in his gorgeous palace, and her merchants are receiving the wealth of the world into their coffers, *more than one hundred years before the commencement of her downfall*, and hear what the voice of the prophets of God say concerning her.

“Her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down.” “The very wall of Babylon shall fall.” “The broad wall of Babylon shall be utterly broken.” “Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from me shall spoilers come unto her, saith the Lord.”*

Still further, if the reader will turn to the 45th chapter of Isaiah, and to the 51st of Jeremiah, he will find several particulars of its fall there stated.

The name of the general who should conquer

* Jer. l. 15—li. 44, 58, 53.



Ruins of Babylon.

Babylon is given more than a hundred years before he was born. "Thus saith the Lord *to his anointed*, to Cyrus." The manner in which he should enter the city is also stated. "I will open before him the two leaved gates; the gates shall not be shut."

Cyrus, the Persian general, surrounded the city with an immense army five hundred and forty years before Christ, and besieged it two years, hoping to force its inhabitants to surrender from starvation. But the Babylonians had provision enough for twenty years, so they laughed at him from the top of their high walls. But during a great feast in the city, while the king and all the people were thinking only of making themselves merry, Cyrus caused the waters of the Euphrates to be turned into the great basin of which we have spoken, which was forty miles square, and then marched his army, in two divisions, from above and below, in the dry bed of the river. The citizens were so given up to pleasure, that they forgot to shut the gates, which led from the river into the city. Through these "two leaved gates" the army entered, and its separate divisions met at the new palace, slew Belshazzar the king, and took the whole city in a few hours.

A great many particulars will be found in the chapters referred to, concerning the taking of Babylon, which we have not room to present. From

the time Cyrus took it, it ceased to be the metropolis of a kingdom, and declined rapidly.

We will now consider, briefly, Isaiah's description of its present state :*

"It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation, neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there; but wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there, satyrs shall dance there, and the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces," &c.

1. Who could have told that so great a city, in a beautiful place, with so fruitful a soil, would *never* be inhabited? Surely none but God. The *exact* place of its location has hitherto been unknown, and the whole region is uninhabited, and many a traveller has sought in vain for some certain trace of those mighty walls.

2. It need not necessarily be inhabited by ferocious beasts, for a few poor people may live among its ruins, and keep under the brutal creation. But God said it *would be so*, and *it is so*.

3. But the Arabians are not afraid of the wild beasts, and they love to rove through the deserts and pitch their tents in the most desolate places.

* Isa. xiii.

But underneath the rubbish of these immense ruins, are deadly scorpions, serpents, and reptiles, so that none can sleep beneath a tent there in safety.

4. But time will crumble into dust this rubbish, and destroy these hiding places. Will not the rich soil again bring forth abundant pasturage, and the shepherd make his fold there? No—so the prophet declares, and so it has been.

5. But it is said that it shall become *pools of water*. Travellers say that within comparatively a few years, the Euphrates, becoming singularly obstructed, two-thirds of the site of Babylon is now “pools of water for the bittern,” (a water fowl,) “to cry in.”

Thus hath “the golden city ceased,” and the desolation of her once crowded streets, and the dust of her splendid palaces, been made the evidence both of the wrath of God against the pride and oppression of kings, and the truth of Jehovah speaking through the *Bible*.

SECTION IV.—*Prophecies concerning the Seven Churches of Asia.*—“*The Revelation of John.*”

IF the reader will turn to the second and third chapters of the Revelation of John, he will find distinct prophecies uttered concerning each of the seven churches there named, which were situated in Asia Minor. The reader will be able to turn to

some Bible Atlas and find the relative position of this country and these churches.

We will point out the prophecies, and their fulfilment, which respect four of them—because the nature of the declarations concerning these will be more easily understood—namely, Ephesus, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and Smyrna.

To the church at Ephesus, John was ordered to write : “Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent.” By “candlestick,” in this prophetic language, is meant *church*. The Ephesians are therefore threatened with the removal of their church “out of its place” except they should repent. For many centuries after this declaration was published to the world, Ephesus remained a flourishing city, so that its church, favoured with the labours of the apostles and early Christians, might hear and consider the warning, and the world know that the denunciations were not written after its decline. “But now a few heaps of stones and some miserable mud cottages, occasionally tenanted by Turks, without one Christian residing there, are all that remains of ancient Ephesus.” It is, as described by different travellers, a desolate, forlorn spot. The epistle to the Ephesians is read throughout the world; but there is none in Ephesus to read it now. They left

their first love, they returned not to their first works. Their "candlestick has been removed out of its place," and not only the *Christian church*, but the great *city* of Ephesus is no more. A modern traveller says, "Its streets are obscured and overgrown. A herd of goats were driven to it for shelter from the sun at noon; and a noisy flight of crows from the quarries seemed to insult its silence. We heard the partridge call in the area of the theatre and stadium. The glorious pomp of its heathen worship is no longer remembered; and Christianity, which was here nursed by apostles and fostered by general councils, until it increased to fulness of stature, barely lingers in an existence hardly visible."

Concerning the church in Philadelphia, Jesus says, as recorded by his servant John, "I know thy works: behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength and hast kept my words and hast not denied my name. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

An American traveller, who has recently visited these cities, writes concerning Philadelphia:

"The promise of Divine interposition in the hour of temptation, is the distinguishing feature in this letter of Jesus to the Philadelphians; and won-

derfully has it been fulfilled for the last eighteen hundred years. The candlestick (the church) has never been removed; the angel (the minister) of the church has always been there. The altar of Jesus has been often shaken, both by the imperial pagan power, when Philadelphia supplied eleven martyrs as companions to Polycarp in the flames at Smyrna, and by the arms of the *false prophet*, when Bajazet and Tamerlane swept over Asia Minor like an inundation; yet it has never been overthrown. The crumbling walls of twenty ruined churches, and the swelling domes and towering minarets of a dozen mosques attest the hours of fiery temptation; yet *three thousand Christian Greeks*, and a half a dozen churches, still kept in repair and still vocal with praise to Jesus, attest that he has been faithful to his promise, 'I also will keep thee in the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.' "

To the Laodicean church the Saviour wrote, "Because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." The writer just quoted, says of the city of Laodicea, "It was situated on several hills of volcanic origin, the principal of which is described by travellers as covered from its summit to its base with ruined arches, broken pillars, and remnants of magnificent buildings. The only living creatures that occupy this melancholy spot are wolves, jackals and foxes. Beneath

the hills and the plains are the smouldering remains of the ancient volcanoes that so often desolated the district and destroyed the city, and which yet render the air *lukewarm*. To a country like this, how awfully appropriate is the message of Jesus, to the church at Laodicea. 'I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. So, then, because thou art neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.' "

From the eleventh century, when the Turk set his iron foot upon it, it became a scene of war. Finally the withering dominion of the Mohammedan settled upon the city, and, lo! she has disappeared, and with her the church which Paul planted, and for which he repeatedly expressed deep concern. All that is known of her subsequent history attests that she heeded not the "counsel" of the Saviour, who said to her, "Buy of me gold, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. Be zealous, therefore, and repent." And because they heeded not, the doom of excommunication was pronounced by the Saviour; their separation from the pale of the church, as something nauseous and loathsome, was threatened; and after a lengthened course of vicissitudes and humiliation, they have been blotted from the map of nations and the family of God. The winds sighing over the hill

of Laodicea, with the melancholy cry of the jackal, are the only sounds which break in upon the solitude."

To the church in Smyrna it was written, "Behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation *ten* days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." In this book, we find a day in the prophetic manner, standing for a year, as in the prophecy of Daniel. The church in Smyrna were to have tribulation ten years. History informs us that this church, with the other Asiatic churches, suffered persecution under Diocletian, precisely that length of time.

Let us look attentively at these prophecies. Of one church it is said, its minister shall be removed out of his place—of another, that it should be preserved amidst a furnace of trial—of a third, that it should be utterly extinguished—and of a fourth, that it should suffer ten years' affliction. Here is a different and specific declaration for each church.

More than one hundred and fifty years ago, there lived in Boston, a well-known divine by the name of Mather. He wrote a great number of books and was esteemed a good and wise man. Now suppose this minister had left among his writings several letters which he had written, one to the citizens of New York, one to the people of Baltimore, another

to the people of Albany, and still another to the people of Philadelphia, and that these letters had been received and read in those cities, with great interest, coming from so distinguished a man as Increase Mather, at one time president of Harvard University. In the letter to New York, we will suppose he wrote as follows;—A devastating plague called the cholera, shall come upon you, and your streets shall be deserted, and your business shall cease.” To the Baltimoreans, “Your town shall be attacked by a victorious army, and they shall fight against it, but they shall not conquer; God shall preserve you.” To the Philadelphians, “War shall rise up in your midst, and you shall slay one another, and you shall be consumed by your civil commotions.” And in the letter to Albany, “Your beautiful town shall increase and become great, but fire shall consume it, and your splendid temples shall become ashes, and the wind shall blow them away.” These letters being found, ever since his day, in the libraries of these several cities, and making a part of their history, and being published also at the time among the works of Mather, and read throughout this country, as well as in England, there would be no doubt about the *time* when they were written. Now if we should open the history of each of these cities and read that New York alone, of all of them, had been desolated by the cholera; that Baltimore alone had been attacked

by a foreign foe, and successfully defended ; that Albany had been consumed by fire, and Philadelphia destroyed by civil war, (the events all having happened more than one hundred years after Mather's letters were known and read,) would it not establish the fact that he was divinely inspired ? And if any should say " Oh, he only happened to guess right," we should answer, " It is very singular that he should have guessed that it was Albany and not New York which should be consumed by fire—that it was New York and not Baltimore or Philadelphia, which should be visited by the cholera ; very singular that *just the right event* was guessed and applied to just the right city. It requires more faith to believe in this wonderful guessing, than to believe Mather, if he should say, ' Thus saith God concerning these cities.' " We may suppose such cases, but the truth is, no such predictions ever have been made, much less fulfilled—except those recorded in the Scriptures, which profess to have been written under the inspiration of God.

Of this character are the letters of the Spirit to the churches in the book of " The Revelation." Their fulfilment is recorded by Volney, a great opposer of religion, and it is very strange that this infidel and scoffer should, in his description of the condition of Philadelphia, use the very expression which had been used in the Bible. He never de-

signed saying any thing to confirm the truth of the Scriptures. He says some of the churches, as well as the world at large, continued to read these letters nine hundred years before their entire accomplishment.

In this chapter on "Prophecy," I have only touched upon the interesting subject. I have said nothing about the Saviour's predictions concerning Jerusalem—nor the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Jews and the Holy Land, as well as those which refer to other nations and remarkable cities, all of which have been most wonderfully and exactly fulfilled. Surely "Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. i. 21.



TOWER V.

EVIDENCE FROM THE BIBLE ITSELF.

SECTION I.—*The remarkable Character of the Doctrines it teaches.*

WE know God must be a great and holy being. The Bible professes to be a revelation from him. We may expect, therefore, that the doctrines it teaches will be like him—that they will be consistent with his holy attributes. We may expect also, that the doctrines will be such as are not clearly revealed in nature, nor easily determined by reason. Before Christ came, and consequently before God's will was fully made known to man, great and powerful nations had flourished on the earth. The Egyptians, the Greeks and the Romans, were remarkable for their wisdom and learning. But they never arrived at a clear knowledge of the true God, nor did their philosophers, with all their study and great talents, possess any just notions either of a Supreme Being, or of man's duty to him if he exists, nor any clear ideas of man's duty to

his fellow-man, the character of a future state, nor even any satisfactory notion of immortality. "Man by wisdom knew not God." He was like a ship in the middle of the ocean without rudder or compass. He was driven by every wind of passion, ready to be cast upon some fatal rock, or swallowed up in the deep. From such a state of confusion and ignorance we turn to the Scriptures, and all is order and beauty. It is a compass to guide man over life's boisterous sea to a haven of rest. It brings to his view, at once, God, his present duty, and his future destiny.

We will take a brief survey of these doctrines.

It sets forth man's original state—the manner in which he came from the hands of Jehovah. "God made man in his own image." How consistent with the character of a holy God! How like him! Himself holy, he creates his creatures holy, and places them in a world, which he has fitted up for their residence, and which he pronounces "good." The moral, intelligent being suited to the Creator, and the creation suited to that intelligent being.

But man being free to obey or disobey God's command, sinned, and thereby forfeited his favour and became subject to his curse. In his affections he became estranged from God. His heart was now "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

But a merciful God did not leave him in this lost

condition, in which he could not have glorified him here, nor have lived with him in the world to come. He had thoughts of mercy concerning him and provided the means of his recovery. In one of the first chapters of the Bible the coming of Christ is foretold. The history of those families from which he was to spring, is preserved. The history of that nation alone is given, to which these families belonged. A system of sacrifices was established in which the great idea of an atonement was taught and kept constantly before the world. While the blood of lambs and of calves flowed from the Jewish altars, they were impressed with the new and astonishing truth that mere penitence could not secure pardon, but that God had prepared a sacrifice. When the prophets came they spoke of Christ—of his birth, the manner of his life, his miracles, his death and future kingdom. The fundamental doctrine of the atonement, then, is everywhere taught in the Bible. In connection with the fall of man it is a consoling, a sublime doctrine, worthy of its author; a doctrine man's wisdom could never devise. In connection with the atonement is the doctrine of Christ's nature. He is represented as truly man, "born of a woman—made under the law." As such, he is "touched with a feeling of our infirmities," and "is tempted in all points as we are." He is also represented as God. This is indeed the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the

flesh. But it bears the impress of Him who is infinite, whom finite creatures may not pretend to fathom in the depth of his designs, or in the mystery of his nature.

With the character and atonement of Christ, the Scriptures connect the doctrine of the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. He it is who helps man's infirmities, enlightens his dark understanding, purifies his heart and fits him for heaven.

The doctrines of repentance, obedience and faith are also taught,—simple and sublime truths exhibiting the goodness of God. Here the way-faring man, though a fool in worldly wisdom, need not err; and he that runneth may read. The degraded heathen, as the first flashes of truth from the gospel gleam amidst their moral darkness, apprehend and exult in the simplicity and power of these doctrines; and the most profound scholar in christendom, when awakened to a true sense of his condition as a sinner and led to flee from the wrath to come, receives these doctrines as a little child, and acknowledges that they are precisely adapted to his case. When the chastening hand of God bows the strong man down with wasting disease, he confesses his helplessness, and yields to the teachings of the Holy Ghost, and on the verge of the tomb, with a body ready to resolve itself into dust, hopes for salvation only through "faith in Christ."

But the Bible does not leave man at his descent

into the tomb. Here heathen philosophy dropped a tear and turned away in confusion. It reasoned and paused in the midst of its speculations, unsatisfied. But the gospel brings "life and immortality to light." It perfects what the preceding revelation darkly intimates. The doctrine of a resurrection from the dead infuses new life into the whole being of man. Though a man dies, he *shall* live again. This state, in which he struggles for a few days and then disappears, is but the beginning of his existence.

"The dead which are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man and come forth." "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of the last trump, the dead shall rise." Surely this is a doctrine worthy of God.

The doctrines of a general judgment and a future state of rewards and punishments are also taught in the Bible. Until their revelation, all seemed confusion in the government of God. The wicked were seen to flourish, and the righteous to sit in deep affliction. Virtue was apparently passed by unrewarded, and wrong went unpunished. But when a judgment to come was revealed, the righteous were taught to refer to it their cause, and the wicked, while prospering in his wickedness, to tremble in view of its certain retribution. The righteous were encouraged by the promise of "crowns of glory," and the wicked restrained by a "fearful looking for

of judgment and fiery indignation that shall devour the adversaries."

Such are some of the doctrines of revelation. How sublime! How closely each is connected with the others, making a complete whole! How perfectly they account for our being here, for the moral condition of man! How admirably suited are they to his present happiness, and how well adapted to prepare him for his eternal existence! Man, by wisdom, could never have known them. Human authority never could have been sufficient to give them power to command the belief of man in all age and conditions. While contemplating them, we are led to exclaim, with reverence and gratitude, "God has indeed spoken to man in the Scriptures of Truth."

SECTION II.—*The Purity of its Morality.*

LET us turn over the sacred pages of the Bible, and we shall find vice in all its degrees and forms condemned, and virtue of every shade and class approved and encouraged. The best and most enlightened of heathen nations failed greatly in attempting to set up a perfect standard of morals. The utter failure of their efforts is abundantly proved in their exhibitions of the character of their deities. Even Jove, the Supreme, to whom they assigned the care of the universe, was subject to the worst of passions. All the inferior gods were guilty of the most de-

graded crimes. Surely the stream could not rise higher than the fountain. The nations could not be more virtuous than the being by whom they supposed themselves governed. Even Lord Bolingbroke, a man of giant intellect, of great political influence, but an avowed infidel, declares, "That no religion ever appeared in the world whose natural tendency was so much directed to the peace and happiness of mankind as the Christian. The gospel of Christ is one continued lesson of the strictest morality, of justice and of universal charity. Supposing Christianity to be a human invention, it is the most amiable and successful invention that ever was imposed on mankind for their good."

Not only does the Bible declare what man ought to do, but it furnishes sufficient motives and reasons for doing it. When Mr. Moffat, the celebrated missionary to Africa, first tried to teach the natives that it was wrong to steal each other's cattle, they laughed at him for what they thought was his simplicity. They could not see why it was wrong, nor by what authority they ought to feel obliged to respect the rights of property. But when they were made acquainted with God, and learned that he had forbidden it, and that the honest were rewarded and the wicked punished, they were afraid and said, "We cannot do as we used to do, because the missionaries have come with the God palaver, (the word of God,) and say we must not steal." Thus all

men's acts are referred to what God commands, and what he rewards or punishes.

Men of skeptical minds, who have taken up the Bible to examine its character, have been constrained to acknowledge its perfect moral standard. We are told that in a city in one of the Northern States, lived a lawyer of eminence and talents. He was notoriously profane. He had a coloured boy at whom his neighbours used to hear him swear with awful violence. One day this gentleman met a professor of religion, who was also a lawyer, and said to him, "I wish, sir, to examine into the truth of the Christian religion. What books would you advise me to read on the evidences of Christianity?"

The Christian, surprised at the inquiry, replied: "That is a question, sir, which you ought to have settled long ago. You ought not to have put off a subject so important to this late period of life."

"Is it too late?" said the inquirer. "I never knew much about it, but I always supposed that Christianity was rejected by the great majority of learned men. I intend, however, now to examine the subject thoroughly myself. I have upon me, as my physicians say, a mortal disease, under which I may live a year and a half or two years, but not probably longer. What books, sir, would you advise me to read?"

"The Bible," said his friend.

"I believe you don't understand me," resumed the unbeliever, surprised in his turn: "I wish to investigate the truth of the Bible."

"I would advise you, sir," repeated the Christian, "to read the Bible. And," he continued, "I will give you my reasons. Most infidels are very ignorant of the Scriptures. Now to reason on any subject correctly, we must understand what it is which we reason about. In the next place, I consider the internal evidence of the truth of the Scriptures stronger than the external."

"And where shall I begin?" inquired the unbeliever. "With the New Testament?"

"No," replied the elder, "at the beginning—at Genesis."

The infidel bought a Bible, went home, and sat down to the serious study of its contents, to try rigidly but impartially its truth.

As he went on in its perusal, he received occasional calls from his Christian friend. The infidel freely remarked upon what he had read, and stated his objections. He liked this passage—he thought such a text touching and beautiful, but he could not credit a third.

One evening the friend called, and found the unbeliever at his house, walking the room with a dejected look, his mind apparently absorbed in thought, not noticing that any one had come in. He continued to walk the room. His friend at length spoke:

"You seem, sir, to be in a brown study. Of what are you thinking?"

"I have been reading," replied the infidel, "the moral law."

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked the elder.

"I will tell you what I used to think," answered the infidel. "I supposed that Moses was the leader of a horde of banditti; that, having a strong mind, he acquired a great influence over a superstitious people; and that, on Mount Sinai, he played off some sort of fire works to the amazement of his ignorant followers, who imagined, in their mingled fear and superstition, that the exhibition was supernatural."

"But what do you think now?" interposed his friend.

"I have been looking," said the infidel, "into the nature of that law. I have been trying to see whether I can add any thing to it, or take any thing from it, so as to make it better. Sir, I cannot. It is *perfect*—a perfect law. The first commandment," continued he, "directs us to make the Creator the object of our supreme love and reverence. That is right. If he be our Creator, Preserver and Supreme Benefactor, we ought to treat him, and none other, as such. The second forbids idolatry. That certainly is right. The third forbids profaneness. The fourth fixes a time for religious worship. If there be a God, he ought surely to be

worshipped. It is suitable that there should be an outward homage significant of our inward regard. If God be worshipped, it is proper that some time should be set apart for that purpose, when all may worship him harmoniously and without interruption. One day in seven is certainly not too much, and I do not know that it is too little. The fifth defines the peculiar duties arising from the family relations. Injuries to our neighbours are then classified by the moral law. They are divided into offences against life, chastity, property and character. And," said he, (applying a legal idea with legal acuteness,) "I notice that the greatest offence in each class is expressly forbidden. Thus the greatest injury to life is murder; to chastity, adultery; to property, theft; to character, perjury; and the greater offence must include the less of the same kind. Murder must include every injury to life; adultery every injury to purity; and so of the rest. And the moral code is closed and perfected by a command forbidding every improper *desire* in regard to our neighbours. I have been thinking," he proceeded, "where Moses could have found that law? I have read history. The Egyptians and the adjacent nations were idolaters; so were the Greeks and Romans; and the wisest and best Greeks or Romans never gave a code of morals like this. Where then did Moses get this law? I again ask myself,—a law which surpasses the wisdom and phi-

losophy of the most enlightened ages? He lived at a period comparatively barbarous, but he has given a code of laws in which the learning and sagacity of all subsequent time can detect no flaw. Where did he get it? He could not have soared so far above his age as to have devised it himself. I am satisfied where he obtained it. It came down from heaven. I am convinced of the truth of the religion of the Bible."

The infidel—infidel no longer—remained to his death a firm believer in the truth of Christianity.

The Saviour, in the New Testament, has expanded the excellent moral precepts of the Old Testament, and has shown more fully how the moral character can be sustained, namely, by the principle of love in the heart; love to God and man,—which is the fulfilling of the law. The moral power of the Bible is now such, that those who do not receive its regenerating influence upon their hearts are constrained to acknowledge that society is better where it is received and revered. The world expects believers in the Bible to be under the healthiest moral restraint, and thus they pay a silent homage to its worth, more forcible than the most laboured defence.

SECTION III.—*Simplicity and Sublimity of its Style.*

FISHER AMES, a distinguished American statesman and orator, who died in 1808, was ardently attached

to the Bible. He lamented its prevailing disuse in schools, and thought that children should be well acquainted with it, both on account of the all-important truths it contains, and because they would thus learn the English language in its purity. He was accustomed to say, "I will hazard the assertion that no man ever did, or ever will become truly eloquent, without being a constant reader of the Bible, and an admirer of the purity and sublimity of its language."

Sir William Jones, whose interesting writings on oriental subjects elucidated many obscure points in Scripture history, was a general scholar, and embellished and adorned every subject which passed under his elegant pen. On the blank leaf of his Bible, the following finely conceived description was found written:—"I have regularly and attentively perused these Holy Scriptures, and am of opinion that this volume, independently of its divine origin, contains more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, more pure morality, more important history, and finer strains of poetry and eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever age or language they may have been written."

This is high praise truly. Let the reader call to mind some portions of the Bible, which will show the simplicity of its style. Turn to the history of the creation. How plain! No effort seems to be made by the inspired penman. We see the order in which God created the heavens and the earth—then

comes the brief but impressive account of man's creation, his fall, the peopling of the earth, the increase of wickedness, and the appalling scene of a world overflowed with water. What child has not read the story of Joseph again and again ! The mistaken partiality of his father, and the jealousy of his brethren. How artlessly he tells his dreams ! How we tremble for him when he goes to Dothan to seek his brethren ! How cruel it was to separate him from his indulgent parent and send him into slavery ! With what interest we follow him through his vicissitudes until he becomes ruler of Egypt, and exercises the authority of a king ! And then, the touching speech of Judah, how it melts the heart ! To complete the absorbing interest of the whole, the meeting of Joseph and his father is presented in so beautiful a manner that we seem to see the old man weeping upon the neck of his long lost and recovered son, and to hear his trembling accents, as he whispers, " Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive."

The history of Samuel, of the unfortunate and erring Saul, of the valiant and eloquent David, and of the rich and prosperous Solomon, are all narrated with such artless simplicity that a child reads them over and over again without weariness, while the most wise and learned are equally delighted and instructed. Through the whole book of Kings, and in the sublime writings of the prophets, the

same straight-forward, smooth, honest-seeming and impressive manner is maintained.

When we open the New Testament and follow the Saviour from his birth to the cross, and from thence to the grave, and in his ascension to the mediatorial throne, we are obliged to acknowledge,—yes, rejecters of the Bible have been constrained to acknowledge,—that never was there so much important history—so many new and sublime truths presented, with so much unaffected simplicity of manner. It is the artless style of the child intent only on unbosoming his full soul in his parent's ear, combined with the maturity of the power of utterance of the ripe scholar. Take, for example, the narrative of the last supper, the report of Christ's last discourse, the subsequent arraignment and condemnation of Christ, his crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and ascension. What a group of imposing events! How distinct are the impressions of the whole scene! We behold the trembling disciples, trying to avoid danger, yet lingering with deep emotion near the place of the solemn catastrophe. The meekness of Jesus is seen in vivid contrast to the malignity of his enemies. We follow the uncomplaining sufferer to the cross. We see his patience and agony. The graves open, the veil of the temple is rent asunder, the earth quakes, darkness shrouds the land. Jesus prays for his enemies, groans and dies, and the scene closes! Could a few paragraphs

embrace, in a clearer manner, and in a more convincing style, more incidents of thrilling interest? Well might Sir William Jones say that its narration is more exquisitely beautiful than that of any other book.

Examples of sublime composition might be selected from almost any part of the Bible. Let the reader re-peruse the song of Moses and the children of Israel when they had escaped so miraculously from Pharaoh*—study the eloquent language of the book of Job, the sublime description by David of the descent of Jehovah in the eighteenth Psalm, and the unequalled imagery of the prophets, especially of Isaiah, and judge for himself.

We are told that when Dr. Franklin was American minister to France, the French nation was overrun with infidel sentiments. Every occasion was seized to cast contempt upon the Bible. Franklin being in a company of gentlemen and ladies of cultivated minds but of skeptical sentiments, the opportunity was improved by some present to ridicule the Scriptures. Some remarked that it was priestcraft, and others that it was a book of superstitious notions, only fit for old women and children; while they nearly all agreed that it was unfit in its *style* for people of refined taste.

On making this last remark they appealed to

* Ex. xv.

Franklin, whose literary acquirements were well known. He waived the subject, and proposed that the company meet at an appointed time and place, and that each should read an example of beautiful or sublime composition from some favourite author. The company met. Some read extracts from Homer; some from the infidel author, Voltaire. Each was enthusiastic in the praise of the selection he had made. When Franklin's turn came he read, "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power. Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood and measured the earth; he beheld and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting. I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. Was the Lord displeased against the rivers? was thine anger against the rivers? was thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thine horses and thy chariots of salvation? Thy bow was made quite naked, according to the oaths of the tribes, even thy word. Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers. The mountains saw thee, and they trembled; the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep ut-

tered his voice and lifted up his hands on high. The sun and moon stood still in their habitation; at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear. Thou didst march through the land in indignation, thou didst thresh the heathen in anger. Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, even for salvation with thine anointed.”*

When Franklin had finished reading, all were loud in their praises of his author, acknowledging him to be more sublime than any whom they had introduced. When they had exhausted their commendations, he simply remarked, holding up the Bible, “This, ladies and gentlemen, is the Bible, and I have given you a specimen of its style, of which you were pleased to speak lightly. My advice to you is, never to disparage a book with which you are not acquainted.”†

SECTION IV.—*The Harmony of all its Teachings.*

THE Bible may well be called, not a single book, but a library. It is made up of many books. There is the book of Genesis. In it is contained, besides the most ancient and thrillingly interesting history, the beginning of the revelation of those doctrines of which we have before spoken. This

* Hab. iii. 3—13.

† We do not know the authority for the story—but we may credit as much of it as we please.

and the next four books were written by Moses. Then comes the detailed history of the settlement of the Holy Land, and next the history of the judges and kings of Israel, and through them all is seen an illustration of the same great moral precepts, and the same plan of God's redeeming love is gradually unfolded. When the various prophets begin to speak, the revelation is still more clear, the language more startling, and the unveiling of Jehovah to man sublime, though he still makes "darkness his secret place, and his pavilion round about him dark waters and thick clouds of the skies." In the New Testament, there are yet many different writers, dwelling upon some points of the same great body of doctrines, while they are giving narratives the most important and yet unpretending. Now, let the reader pause for a moment, and think, that these books were written, many of them hundreds of years apart, all of them at different times, by men living in different countries, speaking different languages, of very different education and habits, as is evident from their difference in style of composition, and yet no one writer contradicts what the other has said. There is nothing in a later writer to take back or amend what a former writer states. No clashing—not a shadow of disagreement in doctrine. Does Moses establish a law requiring sacrifices, thus teaching the doctrine of atonement?—The authors of the history of the Jewish people de-

nounce them as incurring the wrath of God because his altars are thrown down. Does the book of Exodus teach that thou shalt have no other God but Jehovah?—In the book of Kings we learn, that the sword and the pestilence are sent to devour the people, because their groves and high places are full of the images of false gods. Does almost the first page of the Scriptures declare that “God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it,” and are we commanded, a little farther on, to “remember the Sabbath-day and keep it holy?”—If we open to the words of the prophet, far down upon the tide of time, in the midst of other scenes and other generations, we hear him exclaim, “Blessed is the man that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it,”* and adding, “If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my Holy Day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”* If certain blessings are promised on certain conditions in the *earliest* books, the *same* conditions are enforced and

* Isa. lvi. 52.

† Isa. lviii. 13, 14.

carried out *in all the books*. If Moses, in his farewell address to his people, warns them of conduct which will displease God, the latest prophet lifts up his voice with divine authority and declares the coming wrath of God against that *very course of conduct*. We open the New Testament and read, "Not one jot nor one tittle shall pass from the law until all be fulfilled." All is sanctioned. The shadows contained in the ceremony of the former revelation are lost in the noonday light of revelation, but no *doctrine* is altered. The emphatic declaration of the new and great Teacher is, "I came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it." Four different writers take up the history of Christ's life, and in detailing its multiplied transactions we see the peculiar style of each writer, as he gives in a varied form the scenes that have passed before him; but not a shade of difference in any doctrine taught by either can be detected in their several gospels, though in some incidental matters there is an apparent not a real disagreement, rather confirming than weakening the evidence of their genuineness. Thus too in all the epistles are the same truths everywhere unfolded and enforced. In every book, then, of the Bible, we see scattered rays of light; in the whole, they are gathered into a burning focus. Surely all this gives the most satisfactory evidence of the presence of the Divine Mind. "Holy men" of all ages who penned the Sacred Records must

have spoken "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

SECTION V.—*The Character it exhibits of Christ, the Founder of Christianity.*

IN most of the States of our country there is a Retreat for the Insane. It is but a few months since I was in an institution of this kind at Worcester in Massachusetts. It is eligibly situated, commanding a view of a wide extent of the most interesting part of the State. The interior arrangement is equally beautiful, and is fitted up with every possible convenience, for the comfort of that unfortunate class of our fellow beings who are deprived of reason. The long airy halls, the neatly furnished rooms, the promenade galleries, and the kind and laborious attendance, all show that the greatest wisdom and benevolence have been exerted in establishing this Asylum. Let us suppose that an individual man had conceived the idea of such an institution; that he had bestowed all his wealth and years of untiring labour upon it; that it was by him alone that the insane of the State found here either the means of the restoration of their reason, or comfort in their afflicting bereavement; that his voice, as he daily visited the rooms of the inmates, sounded like the sweetest music, roused the drooping spirits of the depressed, and calmed the ravings of the maniac. If you knew the cha-

acter of the institution and the relation of this benevolent man to it, you would be prepared to expect that his whole character was of the most exalted excellence. You would look for an exhibition in him of goodness and usefulness, in all the relations of life, and (according to his means) towards all the poor and suffering of the community.

Or, on the other hand, suppose you should first become acquainted with this man before having been in his Retreat for the Insane, and before having known any of the particulars of its character,—you should converse with him, see his spirit in his daily walk, confer with his intimate friends concerning him, and, in fact, become well acquainted with his character,—what should you think would be the character of such a Retreat when you were told he had been the founder of it? You would at once say, so excellent, so wise, and influential a man would establish no other than an institution which would be a blessing to society. It will be *like the man*, just as you would have said under the other supposition, while looking at the institution, that its founder must be an excellent man. To be told that an unfeeling, selfish, covetous man was the founder of such a retreat, or one having the *appearance* and reputation of such a man, would lead us to suppose that there was some deception about it, and that self-interest, and not the good of the insane, was

the object of it. We might expect that when closely examined, it would not be found to be beneficial even to those whom it pretended to benefit. We expect consistency between a great, a benevolent and useful institution, and its founder; and in the very nature of the case, it must be so. The stream that winds its sluggish way from the midst of a low, nauseous swamp, will not yield pure water; nor do we expect that the clear, sweet waters of a sparkling lake will be replenished from such a source.

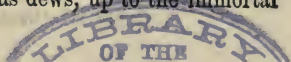
The Christian religion, we have proved, is the concentration of all that is excellent. It offers a retreat for poor deluded, sin-disordered man. It is instituted by Christ, its founder, without cost to those it benefits. He has provided in it every means for their restoration to a right mind. We infer therefore the perfection of his character; and if we find it to be so, we shall have another evidence of the consistency of the Bible, and of its divine origin. Or, if we examine his character, as the authors of the gospels represent it to us, without reference to our knowledge of the religion he has founded, we shall infer that so perfect a head must establish a perfect religion. The pure fountain, high up in the mountain's side, will send forth sweet waters.

We will briefly glance at the character of Jesus. But what a theme! How can we begin to do it justice! We can only stand wondering, and, point-

ing to the cross, exclaim, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" What love was exhibited in his character! We need not contemplate him, as he leaves for a season the glories of heaven, the worship of angels, and the throne of his father, to sojourn on earth, to become a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. We may fix our admiring gaze upon him at the commencement of his ministry. Are the poor begging to be taught the way of salvation, that having suffered with the "evil things" of this world, they may be "comforted" in Abraham's bosom? To them especially does he preach the gospel. He casts his eyes over suffering humanity, and beholding the blind groping in darkness, he touches their eyes and they see. But he would bestow a still greater blessing upon them; he bids them through him receive the light of eternal life. He sees the sick—he heals them, and bids them receive a cure for their sin-sick souls. While he breaks the control of devils over the bodies of men, he would strike the chains that bind their souls to the service of the prince of devils. When his weeping friends stand around the grave of a loved relative, he weeps in sympathy with their affliction; and when about to call the dead to life, he instructs them in the great truth, that he is the "resurrection and the life," and that those who believe in him "shall never die." Thus his love

shows itself in his desire to do good to the bodies and the souls of men.

But not only in his acts do we see the love of the Saviour. It is set forth in his tender language. "The Scriptures contemplate the world, labouring, restless, fevered about the various concerns of the present life; causing their cup of sorrow to overflow, by holding it with an unsteady hand; anxiously looking onward to the future—borrowing the distresses of the morrow to aggravate those of to-day; loading themselves with burdens of grief which do not belong to them, and which they are not required to bear; and, surveying this scene of overtoiled labour, and sleepless anxiety, and wasting solicitude, in which mortals are embroiled, the voice of Jesus, the friend of man, and the tender sympathizer with human woe, is heard, rising in tones of the kindest compassion, above the sighs, and complaints, and groans of the multitude, saying 'Peace, be still; mourner, dry thy tears; ye, who are laden with the self-imposed burdens of worldly care, throw off the heavy load. Ye destitute, who count yourselves outcasts of the world, for whom no one cares, know that you have a Father, and friend in the God of Providence and Grace. Come, learn of me, and I will give you repose. I will remove your anxieties, and lay your hearts to rest on the bosom of that paternal Providence, which cares and provides for all it has made; for every thing, from the meanest herb which it feeds with the precious dews, up to the immortal



soul on which it pours the immediate influence of the divine Spirit.'”*

Christ's *authority* is another striking trait in his character. He spoke not as the scribes and pharisees. He declared his doctrines as one having authority. His words were full of wisdom and power. Read his sermon on the Mount. How mild—how benevolent—and yet how decided! “It has been said of old time, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but *I* say unto you, resist not evil.” When dwelling upon awful truths, carrying the minds of his audience forward into the eternal world, and arraying the universe before himself, with what authority he speaks of the separation of the righteous and the wicked; “These *shall* go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.” When the prophets wrought the miracles, they were careful to connect with them the name and authority of the God of Israel. But Jesus stands at the grave of the dead and says, “Come forth.” He rebukes the wind, saying, “Peace, be still.” To the impure his language is, “*I* will, be thou clean.” He spoke as one who was conscious that “in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead, bodily.” “Surely never man spake like this man.”

But not only in the annunciation of his doctrines did Christ exhibit his authority; his rebuke of sin, while it is mingled with the *love of a Saviour*, shows the authority of the Judge of the world.”

* Harris' “Great Teacher.”

“Witness the cleansing of the temple. Intent on gain, the Jews had converted the holy place into a scene of sacrilegious traffic; they had turned the ancient and solemn passover itself into profit; they bartered deep in the blood of human souls; they worshipped mammon in his Father’s house. But ‘suddenly coming to his temple,’ he, with the tones of injured and insulted Deity, rained on their consciences such strokes of terrible dismay, that they eagerly sought refuge from his holy indignation in flight, leaving him the Lord and sole possessor of the sanctuary.

“But chiefly let us call to our recollection the unbroken series of pregnant woes which he denounced during his last visit to the temple. Long had he walked, like an incarnate conscience, through their guilty land, and often had they been troubled, and trembled at the rebuke of his sacred presence. Having nearly filled the capacious measure of their iniquity by rejecting him, they were about to make it overflow by his crucifixion. Undeterred by the appalling prospect, he came with unfaltering step to the scene of his sufferings, to finish the work which was given him to do. Finding himself surrounded in the temple by a large assemblage of Jewish doctors, scribes, and lawyers, and pharisees, the very elements and essence of the nation’s guilt; he assailed and demolished the enormous fabric of sanctimonious hypocrisy, which their laborious im-

piety had reared, and, with the fidelity and fearlessness of the King of martyrs, denounced and delivered his final protest against the pride and the power which upheld it. They had occasionally heard his fearful comminations before, and trembled for their security, for every word was a weapon; but now, having regularly invested and approached their fortified guilt, he opened on them the dreadful artillery of his divine malediction. An occasional flash had before apprized them that a storm might be near; but now, having collected together all the materials of the tempest into one black and fearful mass, and having awed them to silence, as nature is hushed when awaiting a crisis, he discharged its tremendous contents, in one volleyed and prolonged explosion, on their guilty and unsheltered heads. He arraigned them as though he had already ascended the seat of doom, and laid open all the sepulchral recesses of their iniquity as though he read from the book of God's remembrance. Hypocrisy was unable to conceal itself in the cloud of incense which it offered. The proud, the covetous, the intolerant, he confounded and covered with the shame of detection and conscious guilt. As they came up for judgment in succession, he fulminated against them the woes and imprecations of his wrath—'the wrath of the Lamb,'—in tones anticipating those of their final sentence. 'Wo unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! Ye serpents, ye generation of

vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" That solemn scene, remembering the character of the Great Reprover, and the impending judgments of which it was prognostic, may well remind us of the seven apocalyptic thunders uttering their voices; and often, may we suppose, would the echoes of his denunciations return upon the ears of those who heard them in after years, like the distant but quailing reverberations of the mount that burned."*

It will not surprise us, that Christ exhibited such love, and also, that he exhibited such authority in his teaching and rebukes, when we consider the mysterious union in his person of the two natures of God and man. It is in this peculiarity of his character that his great fitness for the work of man's redemption is seen. He was truly man, that he might be "a high priest, touched with the feeling of our infirmities" and "tempted in all points as we are, and yet without sin"—that men might contemplate him clothed in a like feeble frame, subjected to hunger and thirst, to labour and weariness, to the scorn and buffeting of a wicked world,—might see him in life's sternest conflicts, and from his example be encouraged to endure unto the end. He took upon him our nature that he might suffer the punishment due to sin. But to give efficiency to those sufferings, to clothe his example with authority, to give weight to his teaching, he was God manifest in

* Harris.

the flesh. How perfect then his character! How abundant the reasons for the world to come to him and be saved. We have but glanced at the traits of his character. How must the study of it impress us, that it is perfect—that it is worthy of Christianity, and that he is worthy to be its author!

Many infidels, after attempting to disparage other evidences that Christianity is of God, when they have contemplated the character of its Founder, have not ventured to breathe aught against him. Some have even acknowledged that a religion with such an author could not be from man.

Even the celebrated infidel Rousseau, is compelled to bear testimony to this point, “I will confess to you,” he says, “that the majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the Gospel hath its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of philosophers, with all their pomp of diction, how mean—how contemptible are they, compared with the Scriptures! Is it possible that a book, at once so simple and sublime, should be merely the work of man? Is it possible that the sacred personage, whose history it contains, should be himself a mere man? Do we find that he assumed the tone of an enthusiast, or ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in his manner! What unaffected gracefulness in his delivery! What sublimity in his maxims! What profound wisdom in his discourses! What presence of mind,

what subtlety, what truth in his replies! How great the command of his passions! Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live, and so die, without weakness, and without ostentation? When Plato described his imaginary good man, loaded with all the shame of guilt, yet meriting all the rewards of virtue, he described exactly the character of Jesus Christ: the resemblance was so striking that all the Fathers perceived it."

Well, then, may the defenders of the Bible glory in the character of Christ, which has compelled even the opposers of religion to use such terms of admiration. Well may we hold up his perfect life, his mysterious, yet wonderful nature, and exclaim, "Here is a theme worthy of an angel's pen—yea, of more than an angel's intellect. Here is the grand radiant point, towards which all the infinities converge:—infinite wisdom—infinite love—infinite justice—infinite mercy. Depths, heights, length, breadth—all passing knowledge!" Innumerable pens have been employed upon the life, character, preaching and mediatorial work of Christ. Hundreds of commentaries, more or less critical and extended, have been written upon the four gospels. But have "the seven seals" all been opened? Is there nothing left to reward the toil of those who may hereafter devote their best power to the study and elucidation of these sacred books? "Who by searching can find out God, or who can find out the

Almighty to perfection?" The character of Christ is an infinitely perfect character. The gospels, in which he is exhibited as the divine object of our faith and love and adoration, and which contain the record of his miracles, doctrines and sufferings, and final triumph, "were given by inspiration of God," and "the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" which they contain, are literally inexhaustible. After all "the living water" that has been drawn from these "wells of salvation," there is no diminution of supply. Were a thousand of the most gifted and holy men on earth to "set the Lord Jesus always before them," and spend their whole lives in studying his holy character, they would be so far from exhausting the theme, that other thousands more gifted and more holy might find ample scope for the employment of their powers, down to the end of time. However great and good the last writer, upon the life, character and teachings of Christ may be, and with all the help which he will be able to command, he must leave the divine portraiture still unfinished. Nor can it be doubted, that the mysteries of redemption, including the divine and mediatorial character, the incarnation and atoning sacrifice of the Son of God, will employ the minds, the hearts and the tongues of the redeemed, through everlasting ages; and that new developments of the perfections and "glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, will be made for ever and ever."

TOWER VI.

EVIDENCE FROM EXPERIENCE.

SECTION I.—*The Experiments.*

A FEW years ago, a learned man lectured in London to prove that it was impossible to cross the Atlantic ocean in steam-ships. He showed, no doubt, very clearly, that it was a great distance, that violent storms would arise, and that the sea would overwhelm such a vessel; and he thought he proved that it would take more coal to make the fires under the boilers for the voyage than the ship could carry. People considered him very wise, and almost all believed what he said. But very soon you might have entered the ship-yard, and have seen the carpenters making a vessel. It was to be a steam-ship, and its owners meant to send it on a voyage across the Atlantic. The learned man lectured, the people came to see the ship and laughed, or shook their heads and said, "It cannot be done." But the workmen worked on. By and by, the ship was launched, fitted and sent to sea. In about two weeks thousands of the people of Boston gathered

about the wharves, and shouted, "A steam-ship! A steam-ship from England!" Who doubts now that we can go to London or Liverpool by steam? Experience proves it, and it must be so.

A good man by the name of Grant, a physician by profession, lived in the state of New York, not many years since. One of our missionary societies sent him to Armenia, a country in Asia, to learn what the moral state of the people was, and to see if missionaries could be sent there. He travelled extensively among a very rude people called Koords. At one time he was called very suddenly and earnestly to visit one of their chiefs who was very sick. This chief was a very wicked man, and if Dr. Grant had not pleased him, or if the medicine had not produced a good effect, he would, perhaps, have taken his life. But the Doctor went, trusting in God. He found the warrior in great pain, and very sick. He told him, at once, that he must have some powerful medicine, and that it would make him feel, for a little time, very disagreeable. But the sick man was convinced that he must die if he did not get immediate relief; for this reason, he took the remedy. Its effects were indeed very powerful, and for a time his life seemed to be quite uncertain, but God blessed the means, and the chief was restored to health. He had proved the missionary's skill and remedies by experience, and from that time he placed the strongest confidence in him.

I will present one more illustration, because I wish the evidence of experience to make a deep impression, that my readers may better understand that which is to follow.

There was, at one period, in Jerusalem, a pool of water which had this remarkable quality—that at a certain season of the year the water was troubled, and whoever then first stepped into it was cured, no matter what was his disease. We will suppose an incident connected with this pool. We will sit down for a moment, by the water, at the proper time, and watch the approach of the sick people. There comes a poor leper. His face looks like one mass of corruption, and if you should remove those rags which in part cover him, his whole body would exhibit the same sad sight. See how the people run from him, fearing lest they shall catch his dreadful disease! He pauses for a moment on the brink of the pool. Is he afraid that its waters are no better than other waters, and does he say to himself, “How foolish I am to think that so simple an act can do me any good?” No, he only hesitates because his trembling limbs refuse for a moment to move. He has no other remedy—he is determined to try. He steps in—and in a moment all his disease is removed, and he is made perfectly well. His flesh is restored as the flesh of a little child. He has proved the efficacy of the waters, and goes home praising God. Now, will the

reader attend for a few moments patiently, to the application of all these illustrations?

1. The Bible teaches us that we have a dreadful disease—the disease of sin. That “the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint”—that we are full of wounds and bruises and putrefying sores.* All this we feel in ourselves and see in others. The world is full of sin.

2. The same Bible presents to us a remedy. It tells us how it is provided, and by what means it is to be applied, and describes its effects.

3. It invites us to prove that what it says is true by experiments. It says, “Whosoever will, let him come unto the waters.” “Wash you and make you clean.” “Taste and see that the Lord is good.”

4. Many people, whose testimony ought to be received, have made the experiment, as we shall show in the next sections. Every person may try the Bible remedy for sin, and prove its efficacy by experience, as the Koordish Chief, and the leper in Jerusalem, tried the remedies for their diseased bodies.

SECTION II.—*Testimony from Experience.*

IN one of our colleges there were a large number of young men pursuing their studies with the hope of qualifying themselves for usefulness and distinction in life. A considerable number of them were

* Isa. i. 6.

professors of religion, but the larger part, though generally moral, were not religious. By the goodness of God, an extraordinary interest in religious subjects was awakened among them—such as is usually called “a revival.” Many of the young men tried the remedy prescribed in the Bible for a wicked nature, and proved it to be efficacious. There was one young man who had not often attended religious services, nor had he been under the particular influence of his devout fellow-students; but he knew what instructions the Bible gave to sinners, and what it promised to the obedient. He knew also what course others had taken to become better men, and he had heard them testify concerning the happy effects which had attended their trial. He therefore went into his room one afternoon, locked the door and gave himself up to serious reflections. His thoughts and reasonings were, in substance, as follows:—“I hear many speak of a ‘new heart’—of having been the subject of a great change. These things I have heard often, but I have no experimental knowledge of them. Having read the Bible from my youth, I am persuaded that it teaches plainly the necessity of this change.

“But if what is taught concerning the renewing of the heart is true, I may know it by the most satisfactory of all proof—I may try it for myself. I am resolved to attend the meeting for prayer, and to do so this very evening. I will state to my Christian

friends just what my feelings are. I will ask their prayers and seek their counsel."

These reflections, which I have given as the substance of his thoughts, occupied his mind for several continuous hours, while, no doubt, a great conflict was going on in his feelings. It was not easy to do, what he saw he ought to do. But he went to the meeting, stated his purposes, and the people of God instructed him and prayed for him. He was soon convinced of what he did not see clearly before—that he was a great sinner. This led him to pray earnestly and to cast himself for salvation on Jesus Christ.

At a subsequent period of his college course, if you had entered a retired room in the college buildings, where a few of Christ's professed followers were assembled for religious exercises, this young man might have been seen participating in those exercises, showing, by his spirit and conduct as well as testifying with his lips, that he has a hope through grace of "an inheritance with the saints in light," and an assurance that he has passed from death unto life.

Years have rolled on since those delightful assemblings, but the change then professed has become more and more manifest.

Now let the reader accompany me to a beautiful and retired farm not far from the great metropolis of New England. As we enter that venerable looking house, which bears the marks of more than a hundred years' duration, we see, sitting around the

family table, three aged, interesting persons. That man reading the Word of God, whose white locks and trembling voice at once arrest our attention, is eighty-five years of age—his partner, who sits listening so attentively, is eighty-three, and her sister, who bends under greater infirmities than either, is eighty-four—making, in their united ages, more than two hundred and fifty years. The voice of prayer ascends from the head of the household, morning and at night, as they kneel around the family altar. Tears of gratitude often steal down this venerable disciple's face, as the tremulous tones of his once deep and melodious voice give praises to the God of infinite grace, for the comforts of his declining years.

If we had entered within these walls but a few years ago, after about three score and ten years had passed over this man's head, we should have perceived the same family circle, with nearly the same appearance of age and infirmity. But no family altar had then been erected. Seldom was the Bible perused. Life's sands were nearly run out, the grave was seen already opened to receive its victim, but to him it was repulsive and cheerless. He did not like to think of dying, and eternity stood forth just before him, full of darkness and gloom. The Sabbath's cheerful bells awoke no pleasing thoughts, for they spoke of neglected privileges and unimproved admonitions. But what a change has come over that old man! Punctual at the hour, he may be seen at the house

of God, nearly every Sabbath of the year, and often amid winter's cold and summer's heat, though he comes from a distance of three miles. The language of his heart seems to be, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." If you speak of dying, he says, "I shall soon be at rest"—if of eternity, he answers, "I expect to spend it in heaven."

What has wrought this amazing change? A few years since, he directed his steps to a church where the people of God were seeking his blessing, and his ministers were explaining the truth of the Bible. He saw himself a sinner. He tried the remedy, there revealed, for sin, and the result we have seen.

Having given the experience of a young, intelligent man, and that of an old man, I will add but one more. It is an account of the conversion of a very young girl, written by the celebrated Jonathan Edwards, a great and good man, who preached in New England about one hundred years ago. The child's name was Phebe Bartlett. Her brother, about eleven years old, was converted, and conversed with her; by which means, under the Spirit of God, she was led to feel that she was a sinner. After this she began to retire into a secret place to pray, till at last she became so much in earnest, that she visited the place of prayer five or six times a day. She spoke to her mother of her own accord, of her

want of success in trying to obtain salvation. "On Thursday, (says Dr. Edwards,) the last of July, (1735,) the child being in the closet where it used to retire, its mother heard it speaking aloud, which was unusual, and never had been observed before; and her voice seemed to be as one exceedingly importunate and engaged; but her mother could distinctly hear only these words, (spoken in her childish manner, but which seemed to be spoken with extraordinary earnestness and out of distress of soul,) "*Pray, blessed Lord, give me salvation! I pray, beg, pardon all my sins!*" When the child had done prayer, she came out of the closet and came and sat down by her mother, and cried out aloud. Her mother, very earnestly several times, asked her what the matter was, before she would make any answer; but she continued crying and writhing her body to and fro, like one in anguish of spirit. Her mother then asked her whether she was afraid God would not give her salvation. She answered, "Yes, I am afraid I shall go to hell." Her mother then endeavoured to quiet her, and told her she must pray every day and she hoped God would give her salvation. But she continued thus earnestly crying for some time, till, at length, she suddenly ceased crying and began to smile, and presently said, with a smiling countenance, "Mother, the kingdom of heaven is come to me!"

The little girl continued to be happy in the enjoyment of the presence of God, and in many ways

showed that there was a real change wrought in her heart. She lived to be seventy years old, and throughout her life adorned a Christian profession. Her memoir is one of the publications of the American Sunday-school Union.

Will the reader impress the particulars of these cases on the mind, while I present the memorials of those whose education and circumstances were very different; but, as we shall see, *the experience is the same?*

SECTION III.—*Testimony from Experience among the Heathen.*

The Bible professes to bring good tidings to *all men*. There is not a dark corner of the earth to which its light may not be carried. There are none of the human family so degraded that it cannot exalt them. There are none so ignorant and vile that it cannot enlighten and purify them. I am going to show, by some facts carefully copied from missionary narratives, that all I have said is true. But first let me remind the reader that the heathen, *at the time these facts took place*, were as miserable and wicked as we can imagine men to be. I will state a few facts concerning heathen people generally, that what follows may be more fully understood.

Whole nations of them are murderers. In some countries the parents often cast their children into the streets and rivers to die. The children, in their

turn, carry their parents into the woods, when they are old and helpless, to starve, or be devoured by wild beasts.

They are idolaters. They worship almost every thing upon which they can place their thoughts—the heavenly bodies, the creeping things of the earth, the works of their own hands and the spirit of their own imaginations. The *Great God* they do not like to retain in their thoughts.

They lie so constantly that they scarcely think it is wrong. Missionaries say that this is the case with *all classes* of heathens, in every place where they have been. Children lie to their parents, kings lie to their people and all the people lie to each other.

The heathen, as nations, are thieves. Parents do not teach their children that this is wrong, but laugh at their cunning when they steal so as not to be detected. Kings do not trust their people and the people do not trust each other.

The hearts of the heathen are full of all manner of wicked feelings. They do not live happily together as families or as communities. They hate each other, they hurt and often kill each other, and sometimes eat the bodies of those they have slain. *Love* does not dwell in them, and they are almost strangers to kindness.

Now if these wicked nations hear the gospel—if they listen to what the Bible commands them to do and obey it, and they are made good and happy

by it, will it not still further show that the Bible must be from God?

We might go to Greenland, that cold country, where the people are covered with furs and live on seals and fish, whose huts are dark and dreary, but whose minds were much more dark and gloomy before they received the Bible, and there we should find some whom a belief of the doctrines of the Bible has made good. If we should go among the millions of India, there would be many witnesses of its power to save from sin. If we should inquire among the wandering tribes of Africa, hundreds with happy hearts and joyful countenances would answer, "We know we have passed from death unto life, since the missionary brought to us the Good Book." And if we should visit the wild sons of our own western wilderness, they would tell us, "Since the Great Spirit sent his white children with much talk about Jesus, we have another heart." From all these different nations, thousands of witnesses are raised up every year. We may select examples from any narrative of missionary labour upon which we chance to lay our hands.

1. Will my readers notice, in the first place, that in all these cases in both sections, there is a sense of sinfulness begotten by the truth of the Bible? It does not manifest itself in the same way; it is not equally pungent in all, but it leads to the same results in all—a desire for a new heart.

2. Again, the same means were used by each—prayer, application to Christian instructors, reading of the Bible and faith in Christ.

3. The same joyful state of mind is attained by each disciple.

4. All these, the preparation, the means and the result, are precisely what the Bible describes, and they all occur under the influence of its sacred truth.

SECTION IV.—*Scripture Test of Experience.*

IF a man has been very sick, and has taken a certain medicine prescribed, and says it has made him well, if I know him to be a man of truth, I ought to believe him. And if a great many are sick, and a large number of the most intelligent of them try a certain remedy, and they all agree that its effects are beneficial, they ought to be believed. But if, in addition to what they say about their cure, they get up immediately from sick beds, after taking the medicine, become strong, their pale and languid looks giving way to the rosy hue of health, and if they are moreover enabled to perform their accustomed labour; and if this effect follows in every case when the medicine is taken according to the directions given, then there is a proof of its excellence from its effects, and these effects are tests by which we may know a cure has been wrought.

Not many years ago, a physician prepared a compound which, as he supposed, would cure people of

the love of intoxicating drink. It was put up in bottles, and sold for a great price. People bought it for their friends who were disposed to intemperance. When it was taken, it made the poor inebriate exceedingly sick, so that, for the time, he loathed the very smell and sight of strong drink, and thought then he never should touch it again. But after a short time, his appetite for it returned, and he was found to be the same poor slave to his cup as before. The remedy could not bear the only true test, viz. its power to cure. Now, if all these persons who took the medicine became sober citizens afterwards, provided for their families, went about their accustomed business with a cheerful countenance and happy heart, no reasonable person would doubt its efficacy. Those reformed by it might feelingly relate how sad had been their state, what glad news it was to their ears that a remedy had been found, and they might describe in glowing language, the happy change which had been wrought. And yet perhaps, some would be disposed to deride them and say, "This is all delusion—you are excited—you have still the same appetites, and will, if circumstances are favourable, be guilty of the same brutal sin." But an honest by-stander would say, "You do not judge candidly. I have known some of these men for many years. You see that old man with snow-white locks, and trembling limbs. Did you see the tear which rolled down his face

when he spoke of what he was before he took the remedy, and what he has been since? I have known him for these many years. He killed his poor wife by unkind treatment. He wasted a valuable estate left him by his parents, and his family became dependent upon charity. The old man, who is naturally good-natured, used to have seasons of penitence and often resolved to reform. But when the hour of temptation came, he fell, and after many such efforts he became discouraged and used to say, weeping, as the cup of his ruin went to his lips, 'I must drink—I must, even if it kills me.' His friends heard of the remedy, and procured it for him. The old man seized it and exclaimed, 'It is my only chance, I can but try it; all else has failed.' He drank it. It is ten long years since, and during all that time he has been what you see him now—a sober and happy man. He has collected his scattered family, and by the new life his altered character has infused into them, they obtain a comfortable living." In this supposed narrative the test is presented. The remedy proves efficient. It has made a sober man out of an inebriate.

Now the Bible has not only demanded that the testimony of those who try its remedy for sin should be believed, but it says, "By their fruits ye shall know them." "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Surely men may judge

whether "long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, etc." follow an application of this remedy. But if I should see a person or many persons who profess to have used the gospel remedy, but whom the test condemns, what should I say? Certainly, they have not followed the directions.

If the conditions of salvation from sin which the Bible prescribes are not complied with, as they certainly are not by many who profess to be the disciples of Christ, of course they do not produce the "fruits of the Spirit," "and are none of Christ's." But I could show, by a great many authentic narratives of the life and conduct of persons brought under gospel influences and made obedient to the truth as it is in Christ, that their lives, after their conversion, have been marked by the fruits of the Spirit, such as "long-suffering, gentleness, goodness," while before, they were full of the works of the flesh, "hatred, variance, strife, envyings, etc." There is scarcely a village in our wide-spread, happy country, where there is not an example. All can see that men are made holy if they obey the Bible. But in heathen lands, where the Bible is not known, and no such fruit is found, so soon as the missionaries appear proclaiming Christ and him crucified, a change occurs, like the fading of night before the morning sun—darkness flees away as soon as the true light shines.

A noble English ship was once sailing along

the coast of Africa. For many days they trimmed their sails to a fair breeze, and sped swiftly on towards their desired haven. But the tempest arose. The sea rolled, and night shut in upon them amidst vivid flashes of lightning, and loud and long continued peals of thunder. When the morning dawned, they were running with fearful rapidity upon a rocky coast. No human power could save the ship. It was dashed to pieces, and about eighty, out of a company of one hundred, were cast alive upon the inhospitable coast. The Kafirs were then (as were all the African tribes) a fierce and bloody people. They seized and stripped the sufferers of everything, and beat them cruelly and left them to prolong, as they could, their miserable existence. Some of them they afterwards killed, some they enslaved, and a few, having suffered incredible hardships, arrived among the white settlers at the Cape of Good Hope.

Time passed on, and not many years after, the missionaries, with much suffering, toil and loss of life, established a mission among those same Kafirs. Near that very spot, where the sailors and passengers were robbed and beaten, stood a house of worship. Thither on the holy Sabbath flocked a multitude of natives neatly apparelled and orderly in behaviour. The beacon fires had ceased to blaze from the tops of their hills, to decoy ships upon the fatal shore, that they might plunder them. The bloody sacri-

fices of human victims had given way to the sacrifices of a broken spirit and a contrite heart. Another gallant ship was seen from the highlands, struggling with the winds and waves which were urging her into the fatal breakers. Her suffering crew and passengers and valuable cargo were thrown upon the shore. The sailors knew not where they were, but stood trembling, expecting to be plundered and then beaten and led into captivity, or perhaps speared upon the spot. But the natives approached them kindly. "We cannot kill them," they said. "The missionaries have come, who preach, every Sabbath, 'Thou shalt not kill.' We cannot take these goods, for they say, 'Thou shalt not steal.' We will carry these men to the missionaries;" and the poor sailors were soon housed and fed beneath a friendly roof! They afforded the Bible test that they had been made better. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

About thirty years ago the Sandwich Islands were visited by the missionaries. They were then peopled by nations of idolaters. Their kings were oppressive and blood-thirsty, often commanding the head of a subject to be cut off, to gratify a momentary passion. The most bloody wars were constantly carried on among themselves, and the greatest cruelties perpetrated. Ships dare not land their crews for water, provisions or trade, except they were well armed. And if the whale-ship in distress—after cruising many a weary month, and

braving the storms until her sails were torn and her crew fainting from constant toil—dared venture near their shore, instead of water and provisions and rest, they would find robbery and murder. But the Bible has been there. Their idols are burned. The king now rules in the fear of God, and the people obey because they love their rulers. The house of God stands within sight of the distressed sailor, a beacon to assure him that he is welcome to a friendly shore and a Christian home. The Sabbath bells are heard, and a happy company go up to the courts of the Lord's house to worship. The largest Christian church of any Christian or heathen land is there, having over five thousand members. What has wrought this marvellous change? The Bible! They have taken it, have learned to read its sacred pages, and it has made them a civilized and happy, because a good people. Is there any other book which does not derive its doctrine from the Bible, which produces such effects wherever it is received? Even its enemies do not pretend there is. Now let it be remembered that the Bible declares that the great object of its teachings is to produce just such effects. *This then is God's Book.*

SECTION V.—*Dying Testimony.*

We have given what we believe to be a good test of the genuineness of the experience professed by

Christians. Another important proof of its reality is the testimony given in a dying hour. When men know that they are about to leave this world for a mysterious and eternal existence, the real state of their heart is very likely to be developed. Ambition, love of applause, worldly pleasure and wealth, sink into insignificance, while the soul's interests are seen in something like their true light. Now what is the testimony which comes from such an hour? Is it in favour or against the truths taught in the Bible? Is the consolation it promises realized? Do believers in its doctrines fall asleep in Jesus? Do they feel assured, in so solemn a crisis, that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord? Does the conviction which they have cherished in health, that they have a spiritual life in God, and that he is in an especial manner their Father, increase or diminish, at the moment when the veil is withdrawn and the light of eternity flashes upon their vision? And how do those who have no such experience feel then? Is there any difference of hope or fear between the two classes, and is the difference almost uniform among men of different outward circumstances and varieties of education and position in society? On which side are hope and comfort?

Some would disparage the testimony of a dying hour because the mind is then weak and often times disordered. But there is, also, not unfre-

quently, a quickening of mental perception, and a grasp of thought unequalled in health. What utterance do these quickened energies give?

Allow for a moment that the testimony of the dying is fancy, how is it that the pleasant and consoling imaginings are so uniformly the experience of the righteous, or of those who professed to have received and obeyed the Bible of God's truth?

"My attention was awakened very much," says one, "by observing the dying fancies of the servants of this world, differing with such characteristic singularity from the fancies of the departing Christian. It is no uncommon thing for those who die to believe they see, or hear, or feel, that which appears only fancy to by-standers. Their friends believe that it is the overturning of their intellect. I am not about to enter into the discussion of the question whether it is, or is not, always fancy. Some attribute it to more than fancy; but inasmuch as, in many instances, the mind is deranged whilst its habitation is falling into ruins around it, and inasmuch as it is the common belief that it is only imagination of which I am writing, we will look at it under the name of fancy.

"The fanciful views of the dying servants of sin and the devoted friends of Christ, were strangely different as far as my observation extended. One who had been an entire sensualist and a mocker at religion, whilst dying, appeared in his senses in all

but one thing. 'Take that black man from the room,' said he. He was answered that there was no black man there. He replied, 'There he is, standing near the window. His presence is very irksome to me. Take him out.' After a time, again and again his call was, 'Will no one remove him? Surely some one will take him away.' I was mentioning to another physician, my surprise that he should have been so much distressed, even if there had been many blacks in the room, for he had been waited on by them day and night for many years; also, that the mind had not been diseased in some other respects: when he told me the names of two others, (his patients,) men of similar lives, who were tormented with the same fancy, and in the same way, whilst dying.

"A young female, who called the Man of Calvary her greatest friend, was, when dying, in her senses in all but one particular. 'Mother,' she would say, pointing in a certain direction, 'Do you see those beautiful creatures?' Her mother would answer 'No, there is no one there, my dear.' She would reply, 'Well that is strange. I never saw such countenances and such attire. My eyes never rested on any thing so lovely.' 'Oh,' says one, 'this is all imagination, and the *notions* of a mind *collapsing*; wherefore tell of it?' My answer is, I am not about to dispute or deny that it is fancy; but the fancies differ in features and in texture. Some, in

their derangement, call out, 'Catch me, I am sinking: hold me, I am falling.' Others say, 'Do you hear that music? O, were ever notes so celestial!' This kind of notes and these classes of fancies, belong to different classes of individuals, and who they were was the item which attracted my wonder. Such things are noticed by few and remembered by almost none; but I am inclined to believe that, if notes were kept of such cases, volumes of interest might be formed."*

The important truth suggested in the above quotation is confirmed by the observation of every candid man. Volumes of well authenticated biographies add weight to the testimony. I will present a few instances setting this convicting truth in a still clearer light:

Dr. Cooper, an Englishman, once a judge in Pennsylvania, and afterwards, for a time, president of a College in one of the Southern states, was a man of distinguished talents. He wrote against the Christian Sabbath, and against the ministry, and reasoned much against the Bible. His death, compared with the death of some unbelievers, was triumphant; and yet let the reader observe the whole of the consolation he claims in view of death. He says, in a letter to Judge Hertell, just before his death, "My

* *Cause and Cure of Infidelity*—New York edition, ch. x. p. 267.

shortness of breath is more distressing; my legs swell painfully by bed-time. I walk with some difficulty from one room to the opposite. It is possible I may live over this spring. I greatly disapprove of all kinds of clerical religion, as I do of the whole clerical body everywhere. Of a future state I have no evidence. *Knowing, therefore, nothing about it, I shall die believing nothing, hoping nothing, fearing nothing, caring nothing.*" Thus, by his own confession, there was no hope in his death.

Let us visit now another chamber of sickness and expected death. It is that of Dr. Leechman, principal of the College of Glasgow. He lived a life of unostentatious piety, doing good, and greatly beloved. One of the professors brought to his bedside a young Oxford student, who had been committed by his father, a nobleman, to the care of Dr. Leechman, for the early part of his education. "He took the young scholar by the hand," (says a friend,) "and, with a venerable placid aspect, an animated eye, a distinct though feeble articulation, said, 'You see what a situation I am in, I have not many days to live; and I am glad you have an opportunity of witnessing the tranquillity of my last moments. But it is not tranquillity and composure alone, it is joy and triumph, it is complete exultation;' his features kindled, his voice rose as he spoke. 'And whence,' continued he, 'does this exultation spring? *From that Book,*' pointing to a

Bible which lay on a little table by his bed-side, 'from that Book, too much neglected indeed, but which contains invaluable treasure ! Treasures of joy and rejoicing ; for it makes us certain that this mortal shall put on immortality. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly ! Thanks be unto God who giveth me the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' "

Here is the dying experience of a rejecter of the Bible, contrasted with that of one who claims, almost with his expiring breath, that his hopes and joys are derived from its teaching. Can any candid man refuse such testimony ? But we will present one more contrast.

The celebrated John Randolph was a man of distinguished talents, but devoted most of his life to the pursuit of the world. He says, near his last moments, "I have looked to the Lord Jesus, and hope I have obtained pardon." I do not wish to deny that it is possible he did obtain mercy, for God is of "great mercy," but the following quotation will show his own views of the life he had lived—its nature in the estimation of a dying statesman. The account is by his physician.

"For a short time he lay perfectly quiet, his eyes were closed and I concluded he was disposed to sleep. He suddenly roused from this state, with the words, 'Remorse !' 'Remorse !' It was twice repeated ; at the last time at the top of his voice, evidently with great agitation, he cried out 'Let

me see the word !' No reply was made : having learned enough of the character of my patient to ascertain, that, when I did not know exactly what to say, it was best to say nothing. He then exclaimed, 'Get a dictionary—Let me see the word !' I cast my eyes around me and told him I believed that there was none in the room. 'Write it down then—Let me see the word !' I picked up one of his cards from the table, 'Randolph of Roanoke,' and inquired whether I should write upon that. 'Yes, nothing more proper.' Then with my pencil I wrote "remorse." He took the card in his hands, in a hurried manner, and fastened his eyes upon it with great intensity. 'Write it on the back !' he exclaimed. I did so and handed it to him again. He was exceedingly agitated at this period—he repeated 'Remorse !' You have no idea what it is—you can form no idea of it whatever—it has contributed to bring me to my present situation.' He then said, 'Now let John (his negro servant) take your pencil and draw a line underneath the word,' which was accordingly done. I inquired what was to be done with the card. He replied, 'Put it in your pocket and take care of it; when I am dead look at it.' "

Let the reader compare with the above the following letter written by Dr. Payson just before his death. Dr. Payson was an earnest and successful minister of the gospel, and died at Portland, Maine.

“Were I to adopt the figurative language of Bunyan, I might date this letter from the top of Beulah, of which I have been for some weeks a happy inhabitant. The celestial city is full in my view. Its glories beam upon me, its odours are wafted to me, its sounds strike upon my ears, and its spirit is breathed into my heart. Nothing separates me from it but the river of death, which now appears but as an insignificant rill that may be crossed at a single step, whenever God shall give permission. The Sun of righteousness has been drawing nearer and nearer, appearing larger and brighter as he approached, and now he fills the whole hemisphere; pouring forth a flood of glory in which I seem to float like an insect in the beams of the sun; exulting, yet almost trembling, while I gaze on this excessive brightness, and wondering, with unutterable wonder, why God should deign thus to shine upon a sinful worm. A single heart, and a single tongue, seem altogether inadequate to my wants; I want a whole heart for every separate emotion, and a whole tongue to express that emotion.”

Having thus given sufficient examples, we ask the reader to notice who they are whose dying hours differ so widely—to whom belongs consolation and triumph, and to whom “remorse” and “the blackness of darkness?”

We might add examples of a deeply interesting

and convincing character from the testimony of converted heathen, in contrast with those who die without a knowledge of the Bible. But let the above close our chapter on the *Evidence from Experience*.*

* "The Anchor," published by the American Sunday School Union, will supply very striking illustrations of the truth here taught.



TOWER VII.

CONCLUSION.

SECTION I.—*Summary of the Arguments.*

WE hope we have led our readers along a pleasant and profitable path. If the way has not been at all times pleasing, it must have been because we, who have undertaken the office of guide, have not been skilful in pointing out the goodly prospects. If the journey has not been full of instruction, our diligence in gathering the materials which have so abundantly surrounded us, has been small. Our confidence in the subject, however, is so great, that we cannot doubt that there have been unfolded to the mind of the youthful reader, as we have advanced with our illustrations, many truths of interest and lasting profit. Now, like a traveller, who, in a pleasant journey, has taken notes by the way, we will sit down and recall the scenes of prominent interest—re-impress our minds with the adventures which have been the most thrilling, and so arrange the mass of information that we have obtained, that, at any time, it may be at our command. We have endeavoured to erect way-marks as we ad-

vanced, and these will help our review. We will survey accurately the citadels of strength, and the high towers of defence, of our holy religion ; so that if, hereafter, we are called suddenly to defend it, we shall know wherein its chief power lies. And if there be less novelty in passing over the ground again, there may be more clearness.

We reminded the reader when we set out, that he would hear no audible voice from heaven, saying, "The Bible is God's word"—that no angel would be sent to smite him and arouse him from his stupidity, and communicate the fact that the Scriptures are God's revelation. But he was apprised that, as, in all the important affairs of life, reasons were spread out to be examined and acted upon by thinking beings, so it is with regard to the evidences that prove the truth of the Bible. We have redeemed our promise to give many and strong reasons of its truth ; stronger than those which support the claims of truthfulness made by other books ; stronger than those which command faith in worldly matters ; but to the determination of a free, accountable mind, the whole is left. More is not needed, and he that does not sin against his own convictions will not ask for more.

We have called upon the original witnesses to the divinity of the Bible. We have examined their character. We have diligently inquired into their opportunity of knowing what they have pretended

to witness. We have also examined the important question whether, through the lapse of many hundred years, their testimony has come down to us unimpaired; and we have been delighted and surprised that, amidst the convulsions of nations, the overthrow of kingdoms, the darkness of many ages of profound ignorance, the persecutions of enemies, and the fears of friends, the word has remained unimpaired.

We have found the witnesses honest; their opportunity for knowing, complete; and their testimony is as though we heard it from their own lips. But all this did not prove that what they spoke was true, because they were fallible men. We then examined the miracles which they wrought and which those wrought whose words they quoted, and this proves that God spake through them; and though but men, they could not be mistaken. These miracles we have found every way satisfactory. They were so abundant, that their real character appeared under almost every variety of circumstances. The sea and the river were rolled back in their course, the sun arrested in the heavens, bread was sent from heaven, the blind were made to see, the lame to walk, the sick were healed, and the dead were raised to life! All this was done under such circumstances, and before so many people, that there could not have been any deception; so that even the enemies of the truth did not at the time call them in question.

We have been deeply impressed with the fact that all these wonders were in perfect consistency with the character of the truth revealed. The Bible speaks of God's love to man, the miracles are the exercise of it in him; it teaches man benevolence towards his fellow man, so do the miracles. Christ taught that faith in his name was to save the soul, and he brought into connection with his miracles this same grace, when he said, "Only believe, and thou shalt be made whole." We have seen that the power of working miracles was continued in the church so long as there was any thing to be added to God's revelation, and until a full confirmation was given to the faith of believers, and that then, an humble confidence in the truth thus confirmed, was reasonably demanded. Truly astonishing is the weight of such evidence!

The next step was to examine another sort of miracles—"The prophecies of Scripture." Having seen their rise at the very commencement of revelation, like sparkling rills far up the mountain-side, we have followed their course, widening and deepening, until they have swept in mighty currents down the tide of time, and poured a flood of light on God's truth. Their starting point has been distinctly given, so that no doubt has been left, that they were written before their fulfillment. Their details are such that they could not have been the guess-work of shrewd minds. They were uttered

by those who professed to be sent of God to instruct mankind ; and lastly, their fulfilment has filled us with admiration and wonder. Have the prophets spoken to mighty and prosperous cities, and described, in glowing colours, their future desolation, the manner in which it should be brought about, and the perfect destruction which should be wrought? We have, with the intelligent and candid traveller, walked over the ruined site, and viewed, with wonder and awe, its consummation. Have they made an exception of one city among many which they were denouncing? That city alone, we have seen standing unmoved, for ages, amidst revolutions, fiery persecutions and the innovations by which time accomplished the overthrow of its less fortunate rivals. Do these holy men, being moved by the Holy Ghost, speak of the Messiah? We have dwelt upon their minute descriptions of his birth, life, character, miracles, mock-trial and death, until we seemed to have forgotten that we were listening to one who was speaking hundreds of years before our Saviour's advent, but heard it as from an eye-witness, as it has since taken place. Thus by prophecy we have been convinced that God has spoken through the Scriptures to his creatures, pointing out the way to holiness and heaven.

We have next turned to the Bible itself, having had begotten within us a solemn reverence for its teachings and a deep conviction that God has spoken

it. We have turned over its pages, and found a delightful confirmation of all the evidences which have wrought such conviction of their truth. The impress of Jehovah has appeared in every line. We have first looked at his works in nature, and have seen their simplicity and grandeur. So have we found it in his word. So simple, that the way-faring man, though a fool, need not err therein; so sublime, that the mind of a Newton is lost in wonder while contemplating it. Dwelling upon the fact that a large number of writers composed it, living in different countries, and in ages thousands of years apart, of different habits and education, yet all declaring the same truths, and never, in a single instance, really contradicting each other—carrying out one great system of holy doctrines, until they are fully revealed, and supplied with all the necessary instrumentalities to extend them over the earth, we have felt that this word could not be from man. After having turned from these topics, we have been filled with wonder and gratitude in dwelling upon the perfect character of Christ,—so mild yet decided; so authoritative and yet so lamb-like,—a man to represent our nature, and God to fulfil the demands of the law,—as man to expire upon the cross, as God to rise from the grave, and sit at the right hand of the Father to intercede for a guilty world! Again we have been fully satisfied that our religion is from God, having such a founder.

The Evidences of Christianity, we have found, strengthen as we advance. To the Temple of Truth, which they erect, they add pillar to pillar. Like the sun ascending through a cloudless sky, they pour ray after ray of light, until the meridian splendour enters every hidden recess.

The last source of evidence we examined, is of itself sufficient to establish the divinity of the Bible. To this test, whosoever will, may come, and know that its doctrine is of God. We have been reminded that many thousands in our own happy country, of every class and condition, the learned and the unlearned, the distinguished and obscure, the bond and the free, are making the experiment, and adding testimony to testimony, that "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." The poor heathen idolater, too, suffering in the deepest moral darkness, weighed down by his own impurity, has been called as a witness. His answer has been, "I saw the fountain opened, and one beckoning to me to wash and be clean. I could not hesitate, for what had I to lose? I ventured, and now I am cleansed from my sin." Lest delusion or fanaticism should be mistaken for a change of nature, we have been called upon to examine a test by which the gold can be distinguished from the dross. We have cast our eye along the pathway trod by the messengers bearing the gospel of Christ, and have found it strewed with the richest trophies of divine grace. The very

air has been filled with the perfumes, and with the melody of the sweetest music. The very waves that dash upon the islands where the gospel has been planted, seem to have lost some of their sullen hoarseness, now that they wash a shore comparatively unpolluted with the crimes of heathenism. In contemplating the proof furnished by experience, we have left, for a moment, the busy scenes of life and enterprise, and set ourselves down beside the couch of the dying. We have watched the lamp of life, as it has gone slowly out. We have seen men die without experiencing the transforming power of the Bible truth. Their gloomy forebodings of the future, and bitter regrets for the past, have startled us. Sometimes their frantic cries of despair have made us shudder. Their greatest boasting has been, that "they know nothing, and hope nothing." They have died as the beasts die. Turning from such heart-rending experience, from the chambers shrouded in sack-cloth, we have stepped into the chamber where "the good man meets his fate." Here is one by whom the Bible has been believed and obeyed. What serenity do we see! What holy joy, what inspiring hopes! We have been constrained to say, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

Such is a brief outline of the arguments we have presented. May the unbroken chain they form

bind us with sweet constraint to God's immutable word.

SECTION II.—*Important Inferences from the Argument Presented.*

We infer from what we have learned that the Bible invites a thorough examination of its claims to be the word of God. If we should walk around a walled city and should examine here and there the preparation for defence, and should find it impregnable, we should infer that the whole was well made. A tower in this place, and a well mounted battery in that, seem to say to an enemy, "You will find no access." If we examine seven out of ten gates, and find them of brass, massive and well secured, we may infer that the other three would only confirm the impression that the city is well protected against invasion. In the arguments we have presented to the youthful reader, we have only glanced at a part of the Christian evidences. We have taken them about Zion, and, as we rapidly hurried on lest they should be wearied, we have pointed to its bulwarks, and bid them mark the beauty of its situation. And now they have that general view of her excellent glory—of the strength of her position, they may well conclude that, with a more experienced guide, with more leisure, with more maturity of mind, after a few years shall have given

them the vigour of manhood, they may take a more exact survey, and receive a deeper conviction, that "Beautiful for situation is mount Zion, the joy of the whole earth."

The reader must not infer that no objections can or will be made against Christianity. They may go forth and view the sun as it scatters its light over the earth. They may study its blessed influence in the flowers that cover the fields, and in the rich harvest which the husbandman hastens to gather. They may think of the awful void that would be made in creation, if it were blotted out. Yet there are objections which a determined fault-finder could make against the sun. If, to his closed eyes, creation was still dark, you would not allow him to make the bright luminary of day responsible. If its rays sometimes fell upon his unsheltered head, or blinded his misdirected sight, or if its warmth brought forth no fruit beneath his unskilful culture, you would not for a moment infer, with its abundant blessings everywhere scattered about you, that the sun was not made by God and appointed as a blessing to man. If one should insist that he saw spots in the sun, and to him they were so great, so inconsistent with what it should be, that he could not believe the sun itself was any thing but a blot upon nature, or a mere creation of chance to impose upon man's credulity, you would recur immediately to what you know of its

real nature, and pity his weakness. Thus it is with Christianity. You need not be told what objections man's ingenuity or perverseness may bring against it. You have gazed at this centre of moral light and purity,—you have examined its claims,—you have considered its character,—you have seen its fruits:—This knowledge, with God's blessing, will arm you against all cavils. Knowing the Bible is true from evidence as clear as that which shows the sun to be a blessing to the world, *all objections must be false*. Here you stand. Here you may stand, unscathed by the fiery darts of the devil, and unmoved by the ever changing, contradictory charges of perverse and wicked men. You may exclaim with the poet:

“Should all the forms that men devise,
Assault my faith with treacherous art,
I'd call them vanity and lies,
And bind the gospel to my heart.”

If the Bible be God's word, we ought to study it with *diligence*.

When one of our naval ships is ordered to cruise in a distant ocean, to be gone perhaps for years, a package is sometimes put into the hands of the commanding officer, sealed, with orders not to open it until they arrive at the appointed scene of service. How diligently would such an officer study these instructions, which are to govern all his movements

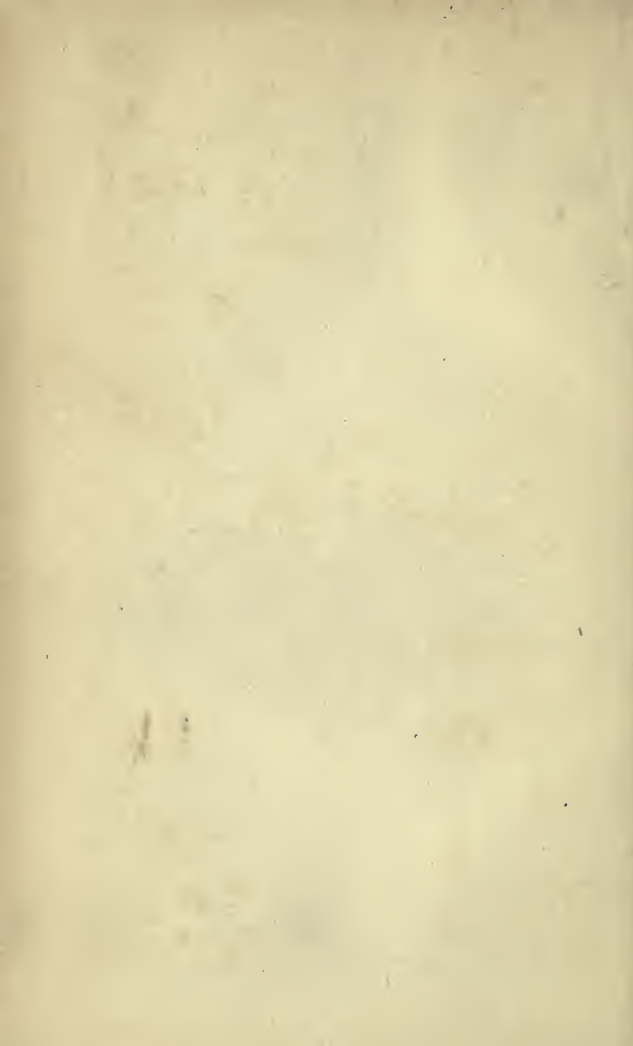
in an important cruise for many toilsome years. Suppose that officer should toss that package among his papers, or carelessly lay it away in a drawer, and, being by this neglect ignorant of his duty, should sail from port to port, seeking his own gratification, would not the government hold him accountable for his ignorance?

We are voyagers to another world; we have a boisterous sea to navigate, with quicksands and rocks on every hand. Darkness will often surround us, and furious storms assail us. The Bible is our book of instructions for this dangerous voyage, but thank God! it is not a sealed book. Its pages are spread out for our perusal; it informs us not only of our present danger, and our every-day duty, but it tells us whither we are going, and the preparation we need for the service which awaits us, which is to be eternal. Ought we not to be found, each day, pondering over its sacred pages—not carelessly, but with prayerful attention; pausing while we read, and silently studying the weighty meaning?

But we must part. It is my earnest hope that you have, springing up within you, a deeper reverence than ever for God's word. You are soon to assume the responsibilities of life. You will be tried by many temptations and perhaps by much adversity. But, in all the changes and chances of life, you will find the Bible a lamp to your feet and a light to your path. A firm belief in its doctrines

and a sincere obedience to its precepts will prove the one overflowing source of true peace; and my prayer is, that, when your earthly course is finished, and your mortal frame is about to be dissolved, you may press the Bible to your breast, looking to God in holy triumph, saying, "THY WORD IS MY SUPPORT."





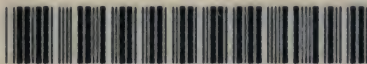








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